CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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₹ STATE BUDGET 2026-27

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K'taka to ride on '11G Model' growth track

CM Siddaramaiah announced 11 sustainable models that the govt would focus on for development of state while presenting Budget- 2026-27

GUARANTEE ECONOMY (Welfare and gender equality)

GOOD PUBLIC EDUCATION (Education for inclusive growth)

GOOD HEALTH TO ALL (Healthcare for a healthy Karnataka)

GRASSROOTS ECONOMY (Agri, rural developemnt)

GOOD GOVERNANCE (Citizen-friendly administration)

GIG ECONOMY (Labour welfare programmes)

GEOGRAPHICAL EQUALITY (Removal of regional disparities)

GLOBAL TRADE ECONOMY (Trade & industrial development)

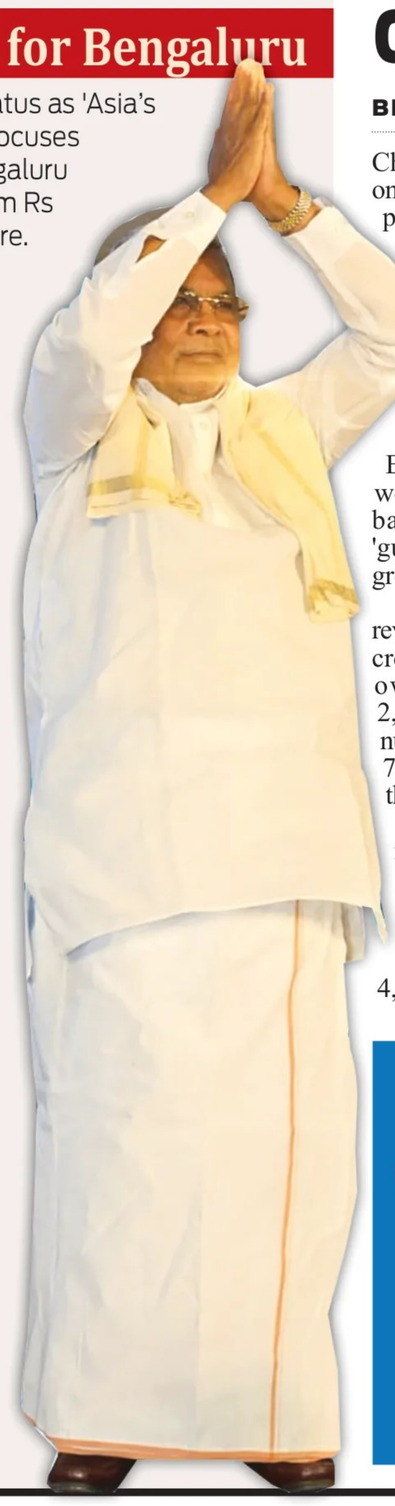
GLOBE-TROTTING ECONOMY (Tourism-driven economic devpt)

GREEN ECONOMY (Environ-friendly activities)

GROWING URBAN ECONOMY (Urban-centric expansion)

What's in store for Bengaluru

To maintain Bengaluru's status as 'Asia's Silicon Valley', the budget focuses on resilience. Grant for Bengaluru development increased from Rs 3,000 crore to Rs 7,000 crore.



- **₹233 cr** state-of-the-art Science City to foster innovation
- **₹16 cr** for AI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.
- **₹5,000 cr** World Bank-funded project under the Karnataka Water Security and Resilience Programme to address flooding..
- **₹450 cr** for development of Outer Ring Road stretch from Silk Board Junction to KR Puram Metro Station into a global-standard corridor.
- **₹2,250 cr** for Tunnel road and an elevated road work from Hebbal Junction to Mehkri Circle by the BDA
- **₹17,780 cr** worth tenders invited for 17-km North-South Corridor from Hebbal Junction to HSR Layout-Silk Board Junction.
- **₹1,700 crore** for white-topping of 158 km of roads.
- **₹5 cr** for Leopard Rehabilitation Centre at Bannerghatta Biological Park.
- A second airport for Bengaluru and seven new domestic airports.

CM presents Rs 4.48 lakh crore plan

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday created a history by presenting his 17th state budget, a record for any Indian Finance Minister. With a massive total outlay of ₹4,48,004 crore, the Budget moves beyond simple welfare push to establish what the Chief Minister calls the '11G Economic Model', a framework designed exclusively to balance the government's 'guarantee schemes' with aggressive high-tech push.

The Budget estimates total revenue receipts at Rs 3,15,050 crore, comprising the state's own tax revenue of Rs 2,20,000 crore, non-tax revenue of Rs 16,000 crore, and Rs 79,050 crore in transfers from the Government of India.

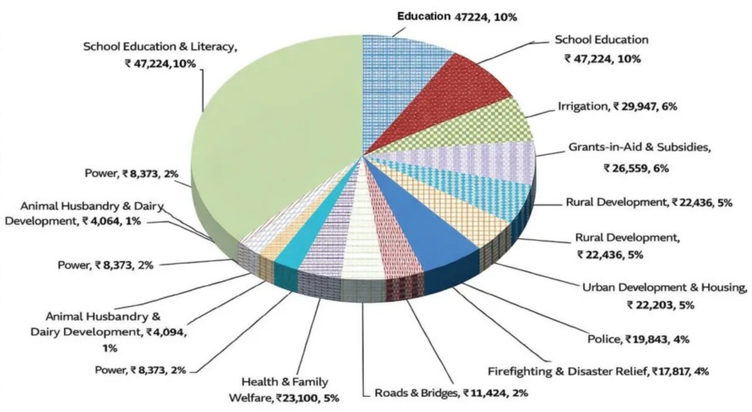
Including gross borrowings of Rs 1,32,000 crore and non-debt capital receipts of Rs 190 crore, the total receipts for 2026–27 are projected at Rs 4,47,240 crore.

The total expenditure for the year is estimated at Rs 4,48,004 crore, including revenue expenditure of Rs 3,38,007 crore, capital expenditure of Rs 74,682 crore, and loan repayments of Rs 35,316 crore.

The government has projected a revenue deficit of Rs 22,957 crore and a fiscal deficit of Rs 97,449 crore, which amounts to 2.95% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Total liabilities by the end of the year are estimated at Rs 8,24,389 crore, accounting for 24.94% of GSDP. The government stated that both figures remain within the limits set under the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act, reflecting continued adherence to fiscal discipline.

Earlier, Siddaramaiah began tabling the Budget at Vidhana Soudha by chanting a vachana by Akkamma. Karnataka has officially become the first state in India to propose a complete ban on social media access for Under 16 children, citing the ill-effects of digital addiction on their mental health and learning abilities.

Composition of State Budget (Revenue & Expenditure) 2026-27 (₹ crore) – Percentage


Education 47224, 10%
School Education ₹ 47,224, 10%
School Education & Literacy, ₹ 47,224,10%
Irrigation, ₹ 29,947, 6%
Grants-in-Aid & Subsidies, ₹ 26,559, 6%
Rural Development, ₹ 22,436, 5%
Rural Development, ₹ 22,436, 5%
Urban Development & Housing, ₹ 22,203, 5%
Police, ₹ 19,843, 4%
Firefighting & Disaster Relief, ₹17,817, 4%
Roads & Bridges, ₹11,424, 2%
Health & Family Welfare, ₹23,100, 5%
Power, ₹ 8,373, 2%
Animal Husbandry & Dairy Development, ₹ 4,064, 1%
Power, ₹ 8,373, 2%
Animal Husbandry & Dairy Development, ₹ 4,094, 1%
Power, ₹ 8,373, 2%

STRESS ON INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECH

He said Karnataka plays a distinctive role in national and international trade, and rapid developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) that are transforming global production systems. He emphasised that innovations in science and technology are increasingly shaping the trajectory of the state that houses Bengaluru, India's Silicon Valley. In this context, he said the Budget 2026 has been presented with responsibility and foresight to move forward with the resolve to "turn fire into light."

GST RATIONALIZATION BEARS FRUITS

On GST rate rationalisation carried out last year, CM said the reforms have reduced the state's GST collections. Before the rationalisation, Karnataka's average monthly GST revenue growth in 2025-26 was around 10%. However, post implementation of the revised rates, the average monthly growth has moderated sharply to around merely 4%.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

LIQUOR PRICES NO LONGER IN GOVT CONTROL

In a major overhaul of the 60-year-old Karnataka Excise Act, Siddaramaiah announced a shift to a global taxation standard and the complete deregulation of alcohol pricing. Starting April 2026, taxes will be levied based on actual alcohol content rather than total volume. This transition will be phased in over the next three to four years to avoid market disruption. Under the new policy, price fixation is deregulated, allowing manufacturers to place their products in slabs based on market competition. To simplify the process, the existing 16 pricing slabs have been halved to 8 slabs. Manufacturing licences will now be auto-renewed, while label approvals and occasional licences (CL-5) will be auto-generated through online self-declaration, removing manual intervention and hurdles. To curb revenue leakage, the state is replacing physical escorts for liquor dispatches with blockchain-based tracking and geofenced e-lock systems. In a boost for the industry, distilleries and breweries are now permitted 24-hour operations. The budget also looks to tap into "alcobeer tourism". Distilleries and breweries will be allowed to host tasting sessions and sell products directly to tourists on their premises. Additionally, the mandatory requirement to display malt and sugar content on beer labels has been removed. The government reported a 12.7% growth in excise revenue for the current fiscal year, reaching Rs 36,492 crore by February. For the 2026-27 financial year, the state has set an ambitious revenue target of Rs 45,000 crore.

India's Silicon Valley bans social media for U-16

Following the lead of countries like Australia and Spain, Karnataka's 2026 Budget includes a directive to block social media platforms for minors.
Why? To combat cyberbullying, behavioral shifts, and falling attention spans.
How?" The government plans to work with tech companies on strict age-verification protocols and potentially new state-level legislation to enforce the ban.

- **AI Tutor Revolution:** To deploy AI-poawered personal tutors for over 12 lakh students.
- **Rohith Vemula Act:** To prevent caste-based atrocities against students across state.
- **Mysuru as second IT city:** Mysuru to be lifted as state's second major IT hub.
- **Second airport after KIA:** A second airport will be developed in Bengaluru to decongest Kempegowda International Airport
- **DPRt on Mekedatu Project:** After the SC dismissed the petitions by the TN government with regard to the Mekedatu scheme
- **To fill 8K home dept vacancies:** A total of 8K vacant posts in Home Dept will be filled up through direct recruitment.
- **15K teachers to be appointed:** 15,000 vacant posts of teachers in schools and colleges will be filled in the next fiscal year.
- **₹ 125 cr for schools, PU colleges:** The government assured that 15,000 vacant posts of teachers in schools and colleges will be filled in the next fiscal year.
- **₹ 3,900 cr for upgradation of 800 schools to KPS:** An expenditure of Rs 3,900 crore will be incurred for upgradation of 800 schools to Karnataka Public Schools (KPS).

'NO DEAL, ONLY SURRENDER'

WASHINGTON

US President Trump on Friday called for Iran's unconditional surrender as necessary to end the war, which was launched by the U.S. and Israel last week.

The war has engulfed regional neighbors in the fighting, disrupted the global economy, killed scores of people and stranded hundreds of thousands of travelers. "There will be no deal with Iran except unconditional surrender!" Trump posted to Truth Social.

The president's latest demands follow his comments a day earlier that he be involved in choosing Iran's next leader, after the U.S. and Israel assassinated the country's top official, Ayatollah Ali Khamanei, and much of the country's senior leadership.

He repeated that demand in his post and said the US and partners will reconstruct the country.

"After that, and the selection of a great and acceptable leader(s), we, and many of our wonderful and very brave allies and partners, will work tirelessly to bring Iran back from the brink of destruction, making it economically bigger, better, and stronger than ever before," he wrote.

'Iran will have a great future. "Make Iran great again (MIGA!).' Thank you for your attention to this matter! President DONALD J. TRUMP," the President added.

US-Israeli war with Iran: Day 7

Israel heavily bombed Iran's capital Tehran and Lebanon again overnight, announcing a "new phase" in the joint war launched almost a week ago with the US, as Iran's retaliatory missile and drone fire continues across the Persian Gulf.

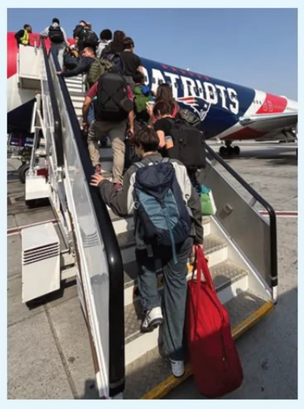
President Trump says the US and Israel intend to "go in and clean out everything," hinting that only complete regime change in Iran will end the war. He says he has ideas about who might make a "good leader" for the country.

The war's impact continues to spread, with NATO bolstering its missile defense posture as Iran's indiscriminate strikes keep traffic in the vital Strait of Hormuz shipping lane, and air travel in the Middle East, at a virtual standstill.

'US ground invasion of Iran will be a waste of time'

US President Donald Trump has denied any possibility of a ground invasion by the US and Israeli forces in Iran, a "waste of time". This was in reaction to the comment by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who, in an interview with NBC News, said that "we are waiting for them". Trump declared that Iran has lost "everything". The US is interested in a diplomatic solution and "wants to clean out everything".

"It's a waste of time. They've lost everything. They've lost their navy. They've lost everything they can lose." he added.



New England Patriots plane charted to take US citizens

An airplane emblazoned with the New England Patriots' logo has been used to bring stranded Americans home from the Middle East. Dylan Johnson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, shared a photo on X of Americans boarding the Patriots plane, at least the second such flight that landed at Dulles International Airport outside Washington on Friday.

50 Israeli fighter jets rain hellfire on Tehran bunkers, Khamenei's bunker struck

JERUSALEM

Israeli fighter jets carried out a major strike in the heart of Tehran early on Friday, targeting an underground bunker built beneath the leadership compound of Iran's supreme leader.

The Israeli Air Force said approximately 50 jets took part in the operation, guided by precise intelligence from Israel's Military Intelligence and coordinated with Mossad. The target was the underground bunker constructed for Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Israeli military described the bunker as serving as "a secure emergency asset" intended for Khamenei to manage fighting during a conflict. It was never used by Khamenei because he had already been eliminated in earlier strikes during Operation "Roaring Lion". After his death, the compound continued to be used by other senior officials of the Iranian regime.

According to the Israeli Air Force, the regime had spent years developing the underground site with the aim of creating a base to advance its military plans and to promote what Israel called its extremist and brutal ideology directed against Israel and the Western world.

"The underground bunker sprawled across entire streets in the heart of Tehran and included multiple entry points and rooms for gatherings of the senior officials of the Iranian terror regime," the Israeli Air Force said in a statement.

The strike followed extensive intelligence gathering and prolonged research by Israel's Military Intelligence. The leadership compound itself served as the central and most important headquarters of the Iranian regime. The Israeli military said the destruction of the bunker has further damaged the regime's command and control capabilities.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who held power as Iran's supreme leader for more than three decades, was killed in joint United States and Israeli strikes. He was 86. Iranian state media announced his death early on Sunday following a major attack launched by Israel and the United States.

Iran fires deadly drones on Gulf

The US military is using the LUCAS drone, a reverse-engineered version of Iran's Shahed-136 against Tehran. A US admiral praised the cost-effective 'Kamikaze' drone as Washington ramps up strikes while Iran continues attacks across Gulf region.

We are resisting an aggression amid escalating conflict: Iran

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister has made a defiant declaration, saying Tehran has "no option but to resist" what it calls aggression by the United States and Israel amid the ongoing war. Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue, he framed Iran's stance as a historic and moral fight and vowed resistance "to the last bullet and last soldier," while condemning foreign attacks and alleged violations of international law. Get the latest analysis on Iran's evolving strategy and what this means for regional tensions.

Flight cancellations leave B'lurians stranded in Gulf

Passengers face uncertainty and delays amid ongoing disruptions affecting Middle East air travel

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Travellers attempting to return to Bengaluru from Gulf countries are facing severe disruptions, with repeated flight cancellations and constantly changing schedules leaving many stranded for days.

The ongoing disturbances in West Asia have affected air travel across the region, forcing airlines to cancel or reschedule several services. Passengers said the uncertainty has made it extremely difficult to plan their return journeys, with many receiving last-minute updates or cancellations.

Aravind Menon, a passenger stranded in Dubai, said that even replacement tickets issued by airlines were proving unreliable. "Our first flight was cancelled and we were given another ticket. But that flight was also cancelled at the last minute. Every day we are told to wait for updates, and there is absolutely no clarity on when we can return to Bengaluru," he said.

Several travellers have now started exploring alternative routes to reach the city. Shilpa Krishnamurthy, an IT professional based in Bengaluru who is currently in Dubai, said she is considering connecting flights through other Gulf cities.

"Many of us are trying to travel via Doha, Muscat or Kuwait City because direct flights to Bengaluru are getting cancelled again and again. I have been stuck in a hotel room for days and it's becoming very exhausting," she said.

Passengers departing from Bengaluru have also expressed concerns as airlines continue to operate with reduced passenger loads due to operational restrictions.

Mohammed Farooq, a businessman planning to travel to Dubai, said uncertainty over flight operations has left travellers anxious. "Some flights are operating with very limited passengers. I heard one flight had only around 50 people on board. The situation keeps changing, so many of us are worried about whether flights will operate normally," he said.

Officials at Kempegowda International Airport confirmed that operations have been affected, with about 30 flights cancelled, including 14 arrivals and 16 departures.

Despite the disruptions, a few services are continuing with adjustments. An Emirates flight from Dubai arrived in Bengaluru with 358 passengers on Thursday evening before departing later with 203 passengers.

Travellers and airport authorities are closely monitoring the situation as disruptions in the region continue to affect international air travel.

QUICK READ

Driver gets 3 months jail for fatal road accident

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
A city court has convicted a 28-year-old mini-goods vehicle driver for causing the death of an autorickshaw driver in a road accident and sentenced him to three months' simple imprisonment along with a fine of ₹3,000. The accused, M. Rehman Saab, had rammed his vehicle into an autorickshaw driven by S.N. Yogesh (19) in Nandini Layout around 11.40 p.m. on May 3, 2023.
The collision threw Yogesh and his friend Ningaraju out of the vehicle. Yogesh later succumbed to severe head injuries. The Rajajinagar traffic police had filed a chargesheet under IPC Sections 279 and 304A. Four eyewitness testimonies and investigation records helped secure the conviction, said Assistant Public Prosecutor Girija Shankar.

IISc Open Day on March 7; motorists advised to avoid CV Raman Road

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Motorists have been advised to avoid CV Raman Road on March 7 as the Indian Institute of Science will host its Open Day programme from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., attracting a large number of visitors.
Traffic police expect heavy movement, with around 150–200 buses, 650–700 cars and up to 80,000 two-wheelers likely to arrive. Visitors have been urged to use public transport to reduce congestion. School buses and cars will be parked at Palace Grounds (Krishna Vihar Gate No. 1), with shuttle buses ferrying visitors to the campus. Two-wheelers must be parked at the IISc Gymkhana Ground. Alternative routes are recommended.

Traffic curbs for road-safety Safe-A-Thon in city

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Traffic restrictions will be in place in parts of the city on Saturday as the Transport Department, in association with police and the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, organises a road-safety awareness event titled 5K Safe-A-Thon. The programme will include a bike rally, cycle rally, walkathon and marathon. Vehicle movement on Kasturba Road will be prohibited between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. The event will start and end at Kanteerava Stadium and pass through Siddalingaiah Junction, Queen's Circle, CTO Junction, Police Thimmaiah Junction, Vidhana Soudha, Gopalagowda Circle, KR Circle, Police Corner and Hudson Circle. No-parking zones include Kasturba Road, Vittal Mallya Road, KG Road, NR Road, Nrupathunga Road and Sheshadri Road.

BEO asks schools to trace missing Class 10 students in B'luru North

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Concerned over a drop in the number of students moving from Class 9 to Class 10 in several government schools, the Block Education Officer (BEO) of Bengaluru North has issued notices to institutions seeking explanations about missing students.

Schools have been directed to monitor attendance closely, track prolonged absenteeism and create awareness among parents about the importance of sending children regularly to school.

The action follows a review that revealed a significant dip in enrolment in Class 10 compared with Class 9 in many schools under the North 2 block. For instance, Karnataka Public School (KPS), Hebbal had 171 students in Class 9 last year, but only 129 students registered for the SSLC examination this year, indicating that around 42 students are missing from the current batch.

A similar decline was observed in several other institutions. KPS on Link Road in Sheshadripuram and Government High School in Santebeedhi, Yeshwantpur, each reported 29 fewer students in Class 10 compared with the previous year's Class 9 strength. KPS Jalahalli recorded 19 fewer students, while Government High School at IISc had 16 fewer students. Government High School, Palace Guttahalli, reported a drop of 15 students, while another government high school recorded 13 fewer students.

Possible over-reporting

Some officials in the School Education Department believe the decline may not be due only to dropouts. In some cases, student numbers may have been exaggerated earlier. Authorities said the situation will become clearer once individual cases are examined in detail.

The notice issued by Lathamani, BEO of North 2 block, asked school heads to submit a detailed report explaining the reasons for the decline. Principals have also been asked to provide the names of the missing students and indicate whether they have discontinued studies, moved to other institutions or registered privately for the SSLC examination.

Schools must also submit copies of the rolls of students registered for the SSLC examination and those who have opted to appear as private candidates.

Under the North 2 jurisdiction, there are 11 government high schools. While 10 schools reported a drop in the number of students progressing to Class 10, only one institution recorded an increase in enrolment.

"We noticed a drop in the number of students in these schools, which is very concerning. We have therefore asked schools to trace the missing children and report back to us," Lathamani said.

Education experts say the problem often begins much earlier in a student's academic journey. According to Pramod Sridharamurthy, Secretary of the India Literacy Project, weak learning levels and long periods of absenteeism can lead to eventual dropouts.

"In many cases, children stay away from school for long periods due to social events when they are younger, and later due to seasonal work. When they return, they struggle to cope with lessons, and eventually drop out," he said. He added that tracking such children requires dedicated personnel and sustained follow-up.

Global Experts Deliberate on Safe Schools at INSIGHT 26 Conference

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Department of Psychology at Kristu Jayanti University, organised INSIGHT 26, a two-day hybrid international conference in collaboration with the Asia Pacific School Psychology Association, focusing on the theme "Safe and Friendly Schools in the Asia Pacific Region."

The inaugural session was presided over by Rev Fr Dr Augustine George, Vice-Chancellor of Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), who spoke about the university's commitment to holistic education and student well-being.

Dr Panch Ramalingam, International President of the Asia Pacific School Psychology Association, underscored the need for regional and international collaboration to strengthen school psychological services.

The Guest of Honour, Prof Gurmeet Singh, former Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University, emphasised the importance of evidence-based interventions and policy-oriented approaches to promote psychological safety and inclusivity in schools.

During the inaugural ceremony, the Conference Book of Abstracts, featuring 182 research papers presented at the conference, was released. The department also launched its annual magazine Pravaha and books titled Advancements in School Psychology, AI and the Future of Education and School Psychology, and School Psychology in the Indian Context (Arabic translation).

The conference featured academic sessions covering themes such as mental health awareness, psychological safety, self-regulated learning, the role of school psychologists, inclusive education for children with disabilities, adolescent suicide prevention in South Asia, school counselling practices in India, hygiene education, emotional and behavioural challenges, positive youth development, and academic self-efficacy. Select research presentations were recognised with Best Paper awards.

As part of the conference outreach, a special children's school assembly was organised with students from Wisdom Montfort School and St. Norbert School. International experts Coosje Griffiths from the University of Western Australia and Dr Parvathy Varma from Assumption University, Thailand interacted with the students, focusing on psychological resilience and mental health awareness among adolescents.

The conference concluded with a renewed call for collaborative efforts to build safe, inclusive, and psychologically supportive school environments across the Asia-Pacific region.

BEL, Bellatrix Partner to Develop Satellite Systems

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

State-run defence electronics major Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has signed a memorandum of understanding with Bengaluru-based space technology startup Bellatrix Aerospace to jointly design, develop and manufacture satellite systems and payloads, with a focus on the emerging Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO) regime.

The agreement seeks to combine BEL's expertise in mission-critical electronics and defence payloads with Bellatrix Aerospace's capabilities in satellite propulsion and subsystems to create next-generation satellite platforms suited for VLEO operations.

VLEO refers to orbital altitudes below the traditional low Earth orbit range, typically between about 150 km and 450 km above the Earth. Satellites operating in this region

can provide higher-resolution imaging, lower communication latency and potentially reduced launch costs. However, satellites in VLEO face stronger atmospheric drag and therefore require advanced propulsion systems to maintain stable orbits.

Under the collaboration, the two companies plan to develop integrated satellite solutions that can support both strategic and civilian space missions. BEL said the partnership would strengthen India's indigenous capabilities in building satellite platforms specifically designed for VLEO operations.

₹8.22 Cr Compensation Given to Kin of Deceased KSRTC Staff

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Compensation amounting to ₹8.22 crore was distributed to the dependents of 35 deceased employees of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) at a programme held at the corporation's Central Office in Bengaluru on Friday. The compensation was distributed by Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy.

Out of the total amount, ₹4 crore was provided to the families of four employees who lost their lives in accidents, with each family receiving ₹1 crore under the Saarige Suraksha Accident Insurance Scheme. Another ₹3.92 crore was distributed to the families of 28 employees who died due to non-accidental causes, with each family receiving ₹14 lakh. Additionally, ₹30 lakh was distributed to the dependents of three deceased employees at ₹10 lakh each.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the Saarige Suraksha scheme was introduced to provide financial security to the families of transport employees. Under the scheme, ₹1 crore accident insurance compensation is provided to the dependents of employees who die due to accidents, either while on duty or off duty. So far, ₹34 crore has been distributed to 34 families under the initiative.

The Minister noted that deaths due to medical causes such as heart attacks, cancer and strokes have increased in recent years. In response, the Corporation enhanced compensation under the Employees' Family Welfare Compensation Scheme from ₹3 lakh to ₹10 lakh in November 2023 and later to ₹14 lakh from September 2025. Expressing condolences to the families of the deceased employees, Reddy assured that compassionate appointments are being provided promptly.

Sanitary Worker Held by Lokayukta for Accepting ₹10,000 Bribe

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka Lokayukta police arrested a sanitary dafedar attached to the Greater Bengaluru Authority for allegedly accepting a ₹10,000 bribe from an electrical contractor in the city.

The accused, M. Nagaraj (39), was working at the Kaval Byrasandra office of the Bengaluru North City Corporation. The complainant, Abdul Rehman (49), a resident of RT Nagar, had undertaken a contract from an apartment to shift a transformer in Kaval Byrasandra.

On February 26, Rehman used a chipping machine to dig the road as part of the work to remove the transformer.

NO CONSENSUS ON RESERVATION

Cabinet Defers Decision on Internal Reservation for Scheduled Castes

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka cabinet deferred a decision on the contentious issue of internal reservation for Scheduled Castes after extensive deliberations failed to yield a consensus. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his cabinet colleagues discussed the matter at length but agreed to hold further consultations before arriving at a final decision.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H. K. Patil said the government remained committed to implementing internal reservation for Scheduled Castes. However, he noted that differing views among stakeholders required further discussion.

"A decision will be taken at another cabinet meeting after gathering opinions from all sides. The Chief Minister will decide when the next meeting will be convened," Mr. Patil told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

He clarified that the ongoing recruitment process to fill 56,432 government vacancies

would continue as scheduled. "There is no hurdle in calling for applications or proceeding with recruitment at this stage," he said, adding that the cabinet would deliberate again before issuing clarity on internal reservation.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Siddaramaiah held discussions with Advocate General and Justice H. N. Nagamohan Das, who headed a one-man commission that examined ways to implement internal reservation within the existing 15% quota for Scheduled Castes.

The state government has been under pressure to fill more than two lakh vacancies across departments. It had earlier decided to proceed with recruitment while adhering to the 50% cap on overall reservation mandated by the Supreme Court.

As a result, the enhanced reservation quota of 17% for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was kept on hold. Departments were instead instructed to earmark an additional 2% and 4% of posts respectively for the two communities. These provisions would take effect if the High Court allows the reservation ceiling to go beyond 50%.

However, some ministers, including K. H. Muniyappa and R. B. Thimmapur, argued that the government should ensure internal reservation within the existing 15% quota itself.

Separately, the cabinet also reviewed the Health Department's proposal to invoke the Essential Services Management Act against health professionals, including permanent and contractual staff, who had threatened to go on strike.

Mr. Patil said the cabinet advised the department not to invoke the Act immediately and instead directed the Health Minister to hold talks with health professionals to resolve the crisis.

The cabinet also approved amendments to the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act to enable municipal bodies to charge market rates for advertising boards within their jurisdictions. Additionally, it cleared a proposal to allocate ₹62 crore for the purchase of BS-VI diesel buses for the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation for inter-city operations.

B'luru Gets Major Infrastructure Push in State Budget

Massive investments planned in transport, water supply, housing, health and environment

BENGALURU

The 2026–27 Karnataka Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah outlines one of the most comprehensive infrastructure development plans for Bengaluru in recent years. With the city's population and vehicle numbers rising sharply, the government has focused on mobility, water supply, housing, environmental protection and social infrastructure.

The plan includes major investments in metro expansion, suburban rail corridors, tunnel roads, drinking water projects, stormwater management and urban governance reforms. In addition, the government has announced new hospitals, educational facilities, housing projects and environmental initiatives aimed

at improving quality of life in the rapidly expanding metropolis.

Urban planners say Bengaluru's growth has outpaced its infrastructure for years, making large investments essential to address congestion, water shortages and environmental stress. The 2026–27 budget attempts to tackle these issues through long-term infrastructure expansion and governance reforms.

A City Under Pressure

Bengaluru has transformed from a garden city into one of the world's leading technology hubs. However, this rapid growth has also created serious urban challenges. With more than a crore residents and millions of vehicles on the road, traffic congestion and urban infrastructure strain have become daily realities. (Hindustan Times)

The new budget acknowledges these challenges and attempts to address them through large investments in transport systems, roads and urban infrastructure.

Transport and Mobility: The Core Focus

One of the most prominent themes of the budget is improving mobility. Road networks, metro expansion, suburban rail systems and tunnel corridors have been prioritized to ease congestion.

Metro Expansion

Namma Metro has become a key component of public transport in Bengaluru.

Currently the metro operates about 96 km of network, carrying nearly 10 lakh passengers daily. The government plans to complete an additional 41 km of metro lines during 2026–27, which is expected to increase daily ridership significantly. The metro expansion is expected to improve connectivity between residential areas, IT corridors and industrial zones while reducing dependence on private vehicles. To improve pedestrian access to metro stations along the IT corridor, the government has also proposed a 9-km pedestrian walkway along the Outer Ring Road metro viaduct, costing about ₹160 crore.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Traffic congestion remains one of Bengaluru's most pressing problems. The budget proposes large investments in improving road infrastructure and pedestrian facilities.

White-Topping of Roads

Around 158 km of roads will be white-topped at a cost of ₹1,700 crore. White-topping involves placing a concrete layer over existing asphalt roads, increasing durability and reducing maintenance.

Over the next three years, more than 450 km of roads will undergo white-topping with an investment of ₹3,000 crore.

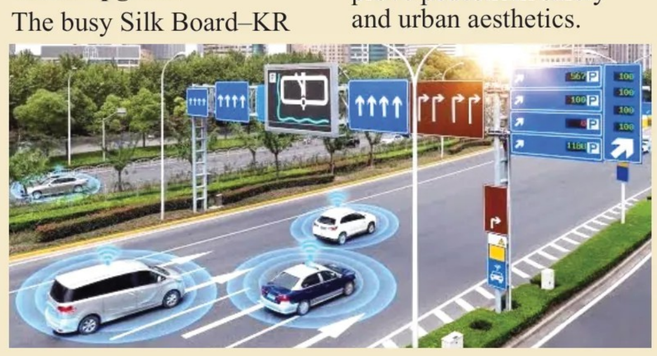
Outer Ring Road Upgrade

The busy Silk Board–KR Puram stretch of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) will be upgraded into a global-standard corridor at a cost of ₹450 crore. This stretch is one of the busiest traffic corridors in the city because it connects major IT parks and residential areas.

Additional Improvements The government has also announced:

- Urban Mobility Improvements
- Beautification of 175 traffic junctions
- Upgradation of 500 km of footpaths
- Construction of 100 skywalks over the next three years

These projects aim to improve pedestrian safety and urban aesthetics.



TUNNEL ROADS & MEGA CORRIDORS

To further reduce congestion, the government has approved two major tunnel road corridors covering about 40 km.

These will be implemented under the Build-Own- Operate-Transfer (BOOT) public-private partnership model, with an estimated cost of ₹40,000 crore.

Proposed Tunnel Corridors

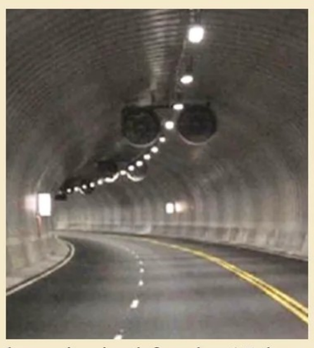
North–South Tunnel

- Hebbal Junction → HSR Layout via Silk Board

East–West Tunnel

- KR Puram → **Mysore Road**

Tenders have already been invited for the 17-km North–South corridor, estimated to cost ₹17,780 crore.



In addition, the Bangalore Development Authority will construct a tunnel road and elevated corridor between Hebbal Junction and Mekhri Circle costing ₹2,250 crore.

B'LURU SUBURBAN RLY PROJECT

The Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP) is another key mobility initiative.

This project aims to connect Bengaluru with surrounding satellite towns and suburbs, reducing pressure on road traffic.

Key Corridors

Corridor-2

- Benniganahalli → Chikkabanavara
- Land acquisition completed

Corridor-4

- Heelalige → Rajanukunte
- Land acquisition in progress

The government has allocated ₹500 crore this year for suburban rail development. Both corridors are expected to be completed by December 2030.

Railway doubling work on the Baiyappanahalli–Hosur and Yeshwanthpur–Channasandra routes is also underway at a cost of ₹812 crore, with the state contributing ₹406 crore.

About 14 km of doubling work has already been opened for public use.

BENGALURU BUSINESS CORRIDOR

Another important project is the 73-km Bengaluru Business Corridor, which will connect Tumakuru Road and Hosur Road.

Land acquisition is currently underway for Phase-1 of the project. Compensation is being provided to farmers on priority.

The corridor is expected to improve connectivity between industrial areas and logistics hubs while reducing heavy vehicle traffic within the city.

INTERMEDIATE RING ROAD

An Intermediate Ring Road connecting Nelamangala, Tavarekere and Bidadi will also be developed using funds from the Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA). This project aims to divert traffic away from central Bengaluru.

WATER SUPPLY AND URBAN INFRA

Water supply remains a major concern in Bengaluru due to rapid population growth. The government has announced the Cauvery Phase-VI Water Supply Project, estimated at ₹6,939 crore. The project is supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Water Supply Highlights

- Additional 6 TMC of water supply
- Current supply from earlier phases: 2,225 MLD
- Beneficiaries: 1.40 crore residents Stormwater management has also been prioritized.

Urban Infrastructure Projects

- ₹273 crore for stormwater drain upgrades and lake development
- ₹2,000 crore under World Bank-assisted Water Security Programme.

Governance Reforms and City Planning

The budget also proposes governance reforms to improve urban planning and administration.

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will oversee city development through multiple municipal corporations. Urban local bodies will be allowed to raise funds through municipal bonds, improving financial autonomy.

Planning Initiatives

- Revised Master Plan-2041 to be implemented by 2027
- Comprehensive Mobility Plan to be prepared within six months
- ₹7,000 crore annual grant for Bengaluru's development

Second Airport for Bengaluru

To reduce congestion at Kempegowda International Airport, the government has proposed exploring the construction of a second airport.

A feasibility study will be conducted in consultation with the Airports Authority of India.

With passenger traffic growing rapidly, officials believe an additional airport may be required in the future.

Health and Medical Infrastructure

The budget also includes major investments in healthcare.

A 1,000-bed charitable super-speciality hospital will be built at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases with support from the Azim Premji Foundation.

Other Healthcare Projects

- Regional cardiac centre of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research in Govindarajanagar (₹15 crore)
- IVF centres at Vani Vilas Hospital and Gulbarga Medical College
- Renaming Victoria Hospital as Shantaveri Gopalagowda Hospital

These initiatives aim to expand access to advanced healthcare services.

Education and Student Support

Education infrastructure also receives attention in the budget.

A boys' hostel for MBBS and BDS students will be built at the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute at a cost of ₹10 crore.

Other initiatives include:

Education Measures

- Digital libraries and study centres for competitive exam aspirants
- 2 Vidyarthi Indira Canteens
- Skill development programmes for students

Social Welfare and Housing

Several welfare schemes focus on housing and social support.

Working Women's Hostels The government plans to construct:

- 10 working women's hostels for SC/ST communities
- 4 additional hostels in Bengaluru with a capacity of 100 residents each

Other Welfare Initiatives

- Construction of Sri Maharshi Valmiki Administrative Soudha at Sumanahalli (₹50 cr)
- 50 post-matric hostels for Backward Classes students
- Minority Development and Training Centre in Kengeri

Modern laundries at Dhobi Ghats will also be established in Bengaluru and Mysuru.

Sports Infrastructure

Sports infrastructure will also see a major boost.

An 80,000-seat cricket stadium and international sports complex called KHB Surya Kreeda Grama will be developed in Anekal by the Karnataka Housing Board.

The complex is expected to host international sporting events and promote sports development.

Environment and Ecology

Environmental conservation is another important component of the budget.

The government has declared 5,676 acres of grassland at Hesaraghatta as the Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve.

These grasslands are important ecological habitats supporting biodiversity and migratory birds.

Governance and Technology

Technology will play a larger role in urban governance.

The government plans to create a ₹25-crore integrated digital platform combining traffic data from multiple agencies.

Other initiatives include:

- Urban Policing Innovation Centre using CSR funding
- Pilot e-courts in Bengaluru, Dharwad, Kalaburagi and Mysuru
- ₹5 crore infrastructure upgrades at Advocate General's offices

Disaster Management and Public Health

A ₹5,000-crore disaster management programme will be implemented over five years to address flooding and other urban disasters.

Healthcare initiatives also include:

- Breast and cervical cancer screening programme
- Vaccination initiatives
- CT scanning centres for livestock in veterinary hospitals

Environmental Projects

- Leopard rehabilitation centre at Bannerghatta National Park (₹5 crore)
- Basavanna Biodiversity Park across 153 acres
- Creation of 100 Miyawaki urban forests
- Centre of Excellence for kayaking and canoeing at Hesaraghatta Lake

Human–Animal Conflict Mitigation Gets ₹1,500 Cr Boost in K'taka Budget

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced a comprehensive set of initiatives aimed at mitigating human–animal conflict, strengthening forest conservation and improving environmental infrastructure while presenting the State Budget in the Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Minister said the government has spent ₹1,044 crore over the last three years to address the growing problem of human–animal conflict across the State. The expenditure covered compensation for crop damage, loss of livestock and human lives, creation of three elephant task forces and one leopard task force with 358 posts, and installation of railway barricades, trenching, solar fencing and other protective measures in vulnerable areas.

To further tackle the issue, the government will implement the Karnataka Man–Animal Conflict Mitigation Programme with an outlay of ₹1,500 crore over the next five years. An allocation of ₹269 crore has been earmarked for the programme in the current financial year, the Chief Minister said.

As part of conservation efforts, 5,676 acres of grassland at Hesaraghatta Grassland have been declared as the Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve, and steps will be taken for its protection and development.

A Leopard Rehabilitation Centre will also be established at Bannerghatta National Park at a cost of ₹5 crore to rehabilitate leopards captured from residential areas on the city's outskirts. The Forest Department will be strengthened with the recruitment of 2,000 personnel in various cadres during 2026–27. A Nature Interpretation Centre will also be developed under a public–private partnership model for visitors to the Mysore Zoo and Bannerghatta Biological Park.

Afforestation activities covering 75,000 hectares will be taken up with an allocation of ₹150 crore, including ₹50 crore from the Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Board.

Welfare Expansion, AI Push and Infrastructure Growth Shape ₹4.48 Lakh Crore Budget

The Government of Karnataka presented its 2026–27 State Budget, marking a significant fiscal roadmap aimed at balancing welfare commitments with economic growth. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah delivered his 17th state budget in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru, outlining a budget outlay of ₹4.48 lakh crore, one of the largest in the state's history. The budget focuses on social welfare schemes, infrastructure expansion, digital transformation, education reforms, and industrial growth. It also introduces new initiatives such as a ban on social media use for children under 16, AI-driven education tools, a second airport for Bengaluru, and major investments in public transport and sports infrastructure. The state government emphasised a development strategy based on a balanced approach between welfare schemes and long-term economic transformation, referred to as the "11G Economic Model."

BUDGET AT A GLANCE

Category	Amount
Total Budget Outlay (2026–27)	₹4, 48,004 crore
Revenue Expenditure	₹4, 48,004 crore
Capital Expenditure	Over ₹1 lakh crore
Focus Areas	Welfare schemes, infrastructure, AI technology, and education, healthcare

Key Highlights of Karnataka Budget 2026

Continued Focus on Welfare Schemes

The state government has reaffirmed its commitment to the flagship "guarantee schemes" introduced earlier, including Gruha Jyoti Scheme, Yuva Nidhi Scheme, Shakti, Gruha Lakshmi, and Anna Bhagya.

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Major welfare measures

- ₹5,300 crore allocated for Shakti Scheme (free bus travel for women).
- Indira Food Kit introduced under Anna Bhagya replacing additional rice distribution.
- Monthly food kits to reach 4.54 crore beneficiaries.
- Record ₹44,632 crore allocated for SC/ST welfare programmes.

The government emphasised that these welfare initiatives are aimed at reducing poverty and improving social security

Salient Features of Karnataka Budget 2026

Major announcements

Total outlay of ₹4.48 lakh crore

- Second Bengaluru Airport proposed
- 80,000-seat international cricket stadium near Bengaluru
- Social media ban for children under 16
- AI-powered digital tutor for 12 lakh students
- 800 schools upgraded to Karnataka Public Schools
- Free insulin pens for children with Type-1 diabetes
- Mysuru to be developed as the state's second IT hub
- Expansion of Namma Metro
- Infrastructure and Urban Development
- Infrastructure development is one of the central pillars of the 2026 budget. Major investments have been proposed in transportation, sports infrastructure, and urban planning.

Sports infrastructure

Construction of an 80,000-seat cricket stadium and international sports complex in Anekal Taluk

These investments aim to ease congestion in Bengaluru and strengthen Karnataka's global competitiveness.

Technology and Digital Governance

The Karnataka government has placed strong emphasis on AI and digital innovation in governance and education.

Key technology initiatives

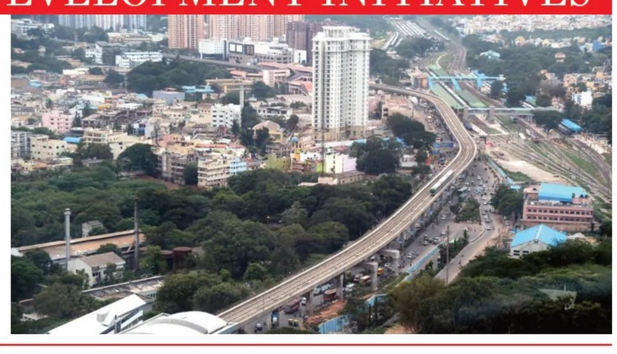
- AI-based Self-Learning Digital Tutor for 12.28 lakh students in classes 8–12.
- Farmer call centres to be upgraded using AI technology.
- Digital initiatives in governance and service delivery.
- The technology push aims to improve education quality and streamline government services.

BENGALURU DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Bengaluru development grants increased from ₹3,000 crore to ₹7,000 crore.

Proposal for second international airport to ease congestion.

₹450 crore Outer Ring Road upgrade project.



Metro expansion

41 km of additional lines to be completed under the Namma Metro network in 2026–27.

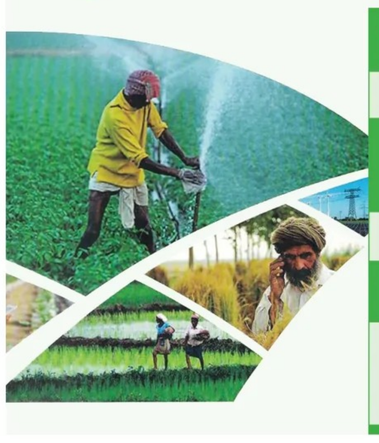
EDUCATION REFORMS

Education received a major boost in the 2026–27 budget, with multiple initiatives aimed at improving school infrastructure and learning outcomes.

MAJOR EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 800 schools upgraded to Karnataka Public Schools with ₹3,900 crore investment.
- Recruitment of 15,000 teachers across the state.
- Centres of Excellence for K-CET, JEE and NEET coaching.
- Student union elections to be conducted in universities.
- These reforms aim to strengthen public education and improve access to quality schooling.

Agriculture and Rural Development



- Agriculture continues to be a priority sector in the budget.
- Major agriculture initiatives
- Vasudhamruta programme to promote sustainable agriculture.
- AI-enabled farmer advisory services.
- Increased investment in rural infrastructure and irrigation.
- The government aims to enhance farmer incomes and encourage sustainable farming practices.

SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

- One of the most widely discussed proposals in the budget is the regulation of digital usage among minors.
- Social media regulation
- Karnataka announced a ban on social media use for children under 16 years, becoming the first Indian state to propose such a regulation.
- The move is intended to address concerns over mental health, addiction, and online safety among teenagers.

Industrial and Economic Development

To diversify economic growth beyond Bengaluru, the government plans to strengthen regional economic centres.

HEALTH SECTOR INITIATIVES

The budget introduced several measures to strengthen public health infrastructure and services.

Key healthcare announcements

- Free insulin pens for children with Type-1 diabetes.
- De-addiction centres for children below 18 years.
- New hospital proposed in Karwar.

IT sector expansion

Mysuru to be developed as Karnataka's second IT hub.

This initiative is expected to:

- REDUCE CONGESTION IN BENGALURU
- PROMOTE BALANCED REGIONAL GROWTH
- CREATE NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN TIER-2 CITIES.

Employment and Governance

The government has announced major recruitment drives in the public sector.

Key employment announcements

- 8,000 vacancies in the Home Department to be filled through direct recruitment.
- Additional hiring in education and public administration.

These measures aim to improve public service delivery and reduce unemployment.

Fiscal Strategy and Economic Vision

The Karnataka government emphasised a balanced fiscal approach that combines welfare spending with infrastructure investment.

KEY ECONOMIC GOALS

- Strengthening digital economy
- Expanding manufacturing and services
- Promoting inclusive growth
- Improving infrastructure in urban and rural areas
- The "11G Economic Model" proposed in the budget integrates growth, governance, green development, and social justice.

Statistics: Karnataka Budget 2026

Sector Allocation / Initiative	
Total Budget	₹4.48 lakh crore
SC/ST Welfare	₹44,632 crore
Shakti Scheme	₹5,300 crore
School Upgradation	₹3,900 crore
Bengaluru Development	₹7,000 crore
Students using AI Tutor	₹12.28 lakh
Anna Bhagya Beneficiaries	₹4.54 crore
Teacher Recruitment	15,000 posts
Home Department Jobs	8,000 posts

KARNATAKA BUDGET 2026: STATE TO FILL 8,000 HOME DEPT VACANCIES; PLANS NEW POLICE STATIONS

Karnataka govt proposed to construct permanent barracks for 1,000 personnel at a cost of Rs 20 crore to provide accommodation facilities for staff deployed for bandobast duties during the legislature session.

BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister in his 17th budget announced that a total of 8000 various vacant posts in the Home Department will be filled up through direct recruitment.

To avoid any kind of recruitment malpractices, a permanent Police and Police Auxiliary Services Recruitment Board will be established to recruit systematically, transparently and regularly in the Home Department. It is proposed to construct permanent barracks for 1,000 personnel at a cost of Rs 20 crore to provide accommodation facilities for staff deployed for bandobast duties during the Legislature Session held at Suvarna Soudha, Belagavi.

For the efficient management of the law and order and the traffic system in the State, 12 new police stations will be established. Further, 10 new police station buildings will be constructed at a cost of Rs.30 crore during the current year. New vehicles, at the cost of Rs 75 crore, will be provided with a view to increasing the mobility in the Home Department.

With a view to effectively managing traffic congestion in Bengaluru, an integrated digital platform will be developed at a cost of Rs.25 crore. Under 'Operation Parishuddikarana,' sophisticated security inspection equipment including Artificial Intrusion Detection System, CCTV, and Body-worn Cameras will be provided at a cost of Rs. 20 crore to prevent the use of mobiles, marijuana, other prohibited items, and illegal activities in all prisons. A Drug De-addiction Centre will be established in the Bengaluru Central Prison in Parappana Agrahara.

Former Director General and Inspector General of Police L Revannasiddaiah, who also served as the Police Commissioner of Bengaluru city, said that decision to fill 8000 policemen are less compared to the growing population. "There should be a trained reserve to meet the requirements as and when," the retired IPS officer said, welcoming the government's proposal to construct permanent barracks for staff deployed for bandobast duties during the Legislature Session held at Suvarna Soudha, Belagavi.

Karnataka to ban social media for children under 16, CM announces in state budget

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced that the Karnataka government will ban social media use for children below 16, while presenting the 2026–27 state budget in the Legislative Assembly.

The announcement follows earlier discussions with university vice-chancellors and educationists, during which Siddaramaiah highlighted concerns over addiction, exposure to harmful content, and behavioural issues among children. The budget confirmed that access for under-16s will be prohibited, with detailed guidelines on implementation and enforcement expected in forthcoming policy documents. The move has drawn nationwide attention, making Karnataka one of the first Indian states to propose such an age-based restriction on social media usage.

Mental health experts and educators, however, have cautioned against a strict ban, warning

of potential psychological and social consequences for adolescents, who increasingly rely on digital devices for schoolwork, peer interaction, and daily routines. They recommend phased regulation, age-appropriate guidelines, digital literacy education, and shared responsibility among parents, schools, and policymakers to encourage healthier digital habits rather than imposing a blanket restriction.

Budget Prioritizes "Karnataka-QUEST" for Skill Training and Improving Education Quality

Government Committed to Enhancing Skills and Employment Opportunities for the State's Youth: Dr. Sharanprakash Patil

BENGALURU

Dr. Sharanprakash R. Patil, Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Livelihood and In-charge Minister of Raichur District, has noted that the announcement of the K-QUEST scheme in the budget — aimed at providing enhanced skill training to the youth through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), KG ITIs, and GTTCs across the state — is a significant step forward.

Reacting to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's presentation of a record 17th budget on Friday, Dr. Patil stated that the budget gives high priority to the youth community, calling it a welcome move.

The CM has announced the "K-QUEST" (Karnataka – Quality Upgradation for Employment and Skills Transformation) scheme in the budget — a five-year program implemented in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at a total cost of ₹1,386 crore. The Minister explained that this will make it possible to provide quality and skill-based training and education.

"The strength of our state lies in its youth. This budget gives high priority to creating a platform of opportunities for young people," he added. Dr. Patil also noted that girl ITI students will be provided fee exemptions along with employment opportunities.

Under the Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDA), a Karnataka Skill Intelligence and Strategy Unit (KSISU) will be established in collaboration with the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM). Global skill alliances will be launched through partnerships with select countries and organizations, the Minister clarified. In addition to the youth, the budget also emphasizes agricultural skill development for women farmers.

Youth Impact Centers in Kalaburagi and Mysuru

Schneider Electric Youth Impact Centers are planned to be established in Mysuru and Kalaburagi at a cost of ₹16 crore each. These centers will help train and provide employment opportunities to a total of 2,000 students every year.

Under the Yuva Nidhi scheme, unemployment allowances totaling ₹913 crore have been disbursed through direct cash transfers to 3,08,267 eligible beneficiaries so far. "This is a testament to the priority our government gives to guarantee schemes," he said.

Government Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded into clusters under the Hub & Spoke model through central, state, and industry partnerships under the PM-SETU scheme announced by the Central Government. Dr. Patil highlighted that it is encouraging that two clusters worth ₹241 crore are planned to be launched in the financial year 2026-27.

"Our government had promised to increase employment opportunities in its manifesto, and we have delivered on that promise. The additional funding allocated in the budget for overall skill development is most welcome," said Dr. Patil, giving the budget full marks.

Liquor Prices, IVF Centres, Rural Devept, InfraTake Centre Stage

The 2026–27 state budget presented by Siddaramaiah marked a significant moment for Karnataka as the government attempted to balance welfare spending, infrastructure development, and fiscal discipline. The budget focused on raising revenue through excise duties, expanding healthcare facilities, strengthening rural governance through Gram Panchayats, supporting farmers and students, and investing in major infrastructure projects such as a second airport for Bengaluru and the Belagavi Industrial Park. Economists described the budget as a "balancing act" between social welfare commitments and the need for economic growth, while opposition leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) criticised several allocations.

ECONOMIC VISION

CM Siddaramaiah arrives at the Karnataka Legislative Assembly ahead of presenting the State Budget 2026.

LIQUOR PRICES LIKELY TO RISE TO BOOST REVENUE

One of the most discussed elements of the Karnataka Budget 2026 was the proposed increase in liquor prices. The state government is considering raising excise duties on Indian Made Liquor (IML) and beer to boost revenue collection. Reports indicate that liquor prices may rise by 10–12%, which could increase the cost of low-range bottles by ₹10–₹20 and premium brands by ₹50–₹100. The excise department has set a revenue target of ₹45,000 crore for the coming fiscal year, up from around ₹40,000 crore in the current year. State officials argue tfhat alcohol taxation is a critical source of revenue because it falls outside the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, allowing states to retain the proceeds. Liquor Revenue Distribution (Estimated) Economists say the policy may help the government finance welfare guarantees but warn that heavy reliance on alcohol taxes could have long-term social implications.

EXPANSION OF IVF CENTRES AND HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Healthcare was another major focus area in the budget, with the government expected to expand fertility treatment services across the state.

The proposal includes:

- Establishing government-supported IVF centres in district hospitals
- Subsidised fertility treatment for low-income couples
- Increased funding for maternal and reproductive healthcare

Health experts have long argued that public healthcare spending in Karnataka remains below recommended levels and needs stronger investment to improve access. Expanding IVF services could help address infertility challenges while reducing dependence on costly private clinics.

STRENGTHENING GRAM PANCHAYATS

The budget also emphasised strengthening local self-governance through the Gram Panchayat system. Key initiatives include:

- Increased grants to Gram Panchayats for infrastructure projects
- Digitisation of rural governance systems
- Funds for sanitation, drinking water, and road development

The state government believes stronger Panchayats will accelerate rural development and improve service delivery in villages.

Rural Development Allocation

Experts say empowering local governments can improve accountability and bring development closer to communities.

SECOND BENGALURU AIRPORT PROPOSAL

Rapid growth in air traffic has revived discussions about a second international airport for Bengaluru.

The existing Kempegowda International Airport has seen a surge in passenger numbers in recent years, prompting policymakers to explore additional aviation infrastructure.

The proposed second airport aims to:

- Reduce congestion at the current airport
- Support Bengaluru's expanding technology sector
- Boost regional economic development

Officials are evaluating potential sites and conducting feasibility studies.

NEW RAIL ROUTES TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

The budget also emphasised improving railway connectivity across Karnataka through cooperation with the central government.

Key priorities include:

- Expansion of rail routes connecting northern Karnataka districts
- Modernisation of existing railway stations
- Faster rail connectivity between Bengaluru and regional cities

These projects are expected to support trade, tourism, and regional mobility.

EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Students and youth also feature prominently in the budget discussions. Public demand has grown for improved education quality rather than purely welfare-based schemes.

Major proposals include:

- Scholarships for economically weaker students
- Modernisation of government schools
- Skill-development programs for youth
- Support for digital learning infrastructure

Parents and educators have emphasised the need for stronger investment in school infrastructure and teacher recruitment.

BJP CRITICISM OF THE BUDGET

Leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party have criticised the budget, accusing the state government of excessive borrowing and reliance on taxes.

Opposition leaders argued that:

- Higher liquor taxes will burden consumers
- Welfare spending could increase state debt
- Infrastructure investments are insufficient

They also questioned whether the government can sustain expensive guarantee schemes without compromising fiscal stability.

FLOOD RELIEF AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Frequent flooding in several districts has forced the government to increase disaster-management funding.

The budget allocates resources for:

- Flood relief compensation for a ffected families
- Strengthening river embankments
- Improving drainage infrastructure in urban areas
- Disaster preparedness programs

Climate experts say such investments are crucial as extreme rainfall events become more frequent in southern India.

SUPPORT FOR FARMERS AND AGRICULTURE

Agriculture remains a central pillar of the state economy, and the budget introduced several measures aimed at helping farmers.

Key initiatives include:

- Subsidised seeds and fertilisers
- Expansion of irrigation projects
- Support for organic farming
- Investment in agri-technology and storage infrastructure

Farmers have also demanded stronger market support and price stabilisation mechanisms to deal with fluctuating crop prices.

BELAGAVI INDUSTRIAL PARK TO DRIVE GROWTH

The government plans to establish a major industrial park in Belagavi to boost manufacturing and employment.

The proposed Belagavi Industrial Park aims to:

- Attract domestic and international investors
- Promote industries such as automotive, engineering, and electronics
- Generate thousands of jobs in northern Karnataka

Officials believe this initiative could help reduce regional economic disparities and encourage balanced development across the state.

ECONOMISTS OFFER MIXED REACTIONS

Economists and policy analysts offered varied reactions to the Karnataka Budget 2026.

Positive views:

- Increased infrastructure spending could stimulate growth
- Investments in healthcare and agriculture may improve social outcomes
- Industrial development projects could attract private investment

A Progressive Budget – Zameer Ahmed Khan

BENGALURU

Housing and Minority Welfare Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan has said that the budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah supports the overall development of the state. He stated that the budget protects the interests of all people with the vision of equal share and equal opportunities for everyone. In his statement about the budget, he said it reflects Siddaramaiah's vast experience and commitment to development. The budget gives importance to the growth of all sectors including agriculture, rural development, industry, health, education, and tourism. He also noted that the budget places special emphasis on education for minority communities. The increase in funds allocated for poor people to build houses is welcome. The announcement of providing 50,000 housing sites at concessional rates through the Housing Board will benefit the middle class, he said. Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan also criticized leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for protesting that the Minority Welfare Department received a higher allocation in the budget.

K.J. George Praises 'Mukhya Mantri Saura Krishi Yojana

BENGALURU

Energy Minister K.J. George praised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for introducing the Mukhya Mantri Saura Krishi Yojana in the State Budget, calling it a major step toward fulfilling the government's promise to farmers. The scheme aims to generate about 3,000 MW of solar power to provide seven hours of daytime electricity for agricultural pump sets.

Reacting to the Budget, George said that when the government came to power, the state was facing a severe drought, yet it ensured seven hours of power supply to farmers. He added that the government successfully implemented the centrally sponsored KUSUM-C scheme, which solarises agricultural feeders to provide daytime electricity. The new scheme builds on similar lines to strengthen power supply for irrigation. George also highlighted that ₹19,290 crore has been allocated to continue providing free electricity to pump sets up to 10 horsepower, demonstrating the government's commitment to farmers.

QUICK READ

Mysuru Budget fails to meet public expectations

Mysuru

The people of Mysuru district had high hopes from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, but this year's budget has proved disappointing. Several projects from the previous budget were repeated, while many new schemes lack clear funding allocations. The state government's biggest claim is having taken a loan of around Rs. 8.24 lakh crore, yet critics say it has failed to ensure development and protect citizens' welfare. Hunsur MLA G.D. Harish Gowda and the JDS assembly chief whip expressed concern, emphasizing that the district's expectations remain unmet and urgent attention is needed.

Hiremallur bullock festival gets conditional approval

Hiremallur

The District Magistrate, Dr. Vijayamahanthesh Danamma, has granted permission to celebrate Hori Habba in Hiremallur village of Shiggaon taluk on March 7 with strict conditions. Organizers, associations, and participants must ensure no cruelty or torture to bulls, or legal action will follow under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Bull owners must have livestock transport certificates from a veterinary officer. The bullock race must be recorded on video, with copies provided to winners. Authorities reserve the right to cancel permission immediately if any rules are violated, ensuring the festival is conducted safely and responsibly.

Power shutdown scheduled for March 8th

Mandya

The Mandya region will experience a planned power outage on March 8 from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm due to quarterly maintenance at the 66/11 KV KIADB and Thumbakere Power Distribution Centers.

For the KIADB Power Distribution Center, affected areas include urban localities such as Guthalu, Factory Circle, Industrial Estates, M.C. Road, Tarekere, Nehru Nagar, Udayagiri, Sadat Mohalla, Channaiah Estate, Siddhartha Estate, Bangalore Main Road, Hebbal, and nearby surroundings. Rural areas affected are Srinivasapura Gate, Hanakere IP Area, Keelara IP Area, Basavanapura IP Area, and villages like Budanur, Bhootana Hosur, Channappana Doddi, Hambarahalli, among others.

For the Thumbakere Electricity Distribution Center, non-rural areas including Hodaghatta, Keelara, Hanakere, Hale Budanur, Hosaboodanur.

Grand Nayakanahatti Rathotsava draws lakhs of devotees

From morning, devotees gathered at Nayakanahatti, performing continuous worship at inner and outer mathas, patiently waiting in long darshan queues

CHITRADURGA

The grand Rathotsava of Sri Tipperudraswamy was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm at Nayakanahatti, one of the famous pilgrimage centres of central Karnataka, on Friday. Lakhs of devotees gathered to witness the traditional chariot festival and seek blessings.

Religious rituals began in the afternoon inside the inner math under the guidance of the chief priest. The Utsava idol of Tipperudraswamy was placed in a decorated palanquin and later taken to the chariot for the Rathotsava. At

around 3.33 pm, during the auspicious Chitta Nakshatra, devotees pulled the grand chariot from the temple street towards the outer math amid chants praising the saint.

Devotees offered bananas, black pepper, flowers, dhavana leaves and pieces of jaggery to the chariot while praying for the fulfilment of their wishes. Slogans such as "Sri Tipperudraswamy Jayavagali" and "Kayakayogi Jayavagali" echoed through the town as people pulled the chariot rope with devotion. Many prayed for prosperity, peace and good rains. From early morning, devotees had gathered at Nayakanahatti to witness the festival. Continuous worship was conducted at both the inner and outer mathas and devotees waited patiently in long queues for darshan.

Chief priest Shivalinganna said the five-day fair is held every year in memory of Sri Tipperudraswamy and is organised jointly by the inner, outer and Ekanta mathas. The ritual of burning "Koppari", symbolising the journey from darkness to light, is an important tradition of the festival. One of the highlights of the fair, the Mukti Bhauta auction, fetched ₹32 lakhs this year and was purchased by Srinath from Tumkur district. Several dignitaries including D. Sudhakar and Govind Karajol attended the event along with district officials.

Women's Commission Chief calls for safer workplaces

Nagalakshmi Chaudhary said the 2013 law protects women from workplace harassment; Karnataka leads with 80,000+ committees, addressing insults, indecent behavior, messages, or misconduct promptly

MANGALURU

Women must be given a safe and respectful environment at their workplaces, said Karnataka State Women's Commission Chairperson Nagalakshmi Chaudhary. She urged women not to remain silent if they face harassment and to raise complaints with courage.

She was speaking at a training program on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplaces Act, 2013, held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan in Mangaluru on Friday. The program was organized jointly by the National Women's Commission, Karnataka Women's Commission, Dakshina Kannada District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Department of Women and Child Development.

Nagalakshmi Chaudhary said the law was introduced in 2013 to protect women from harassment at workplaces. Karnataka is among the leading states in implementing the law, with more than 80,000 Internal Complaints Committees formed across government and private institutions.

She explained that women may face different forms of harassment such as insults, indecent behavior, inappropriate messages or other forms of misconduct at workplaces. Women should immediately approach the internal complaints committee in such situations.

According to the law, every institution with ten or more women employees must form an Internal Complaints Committee to address such complaints. The committees must act responsibly and ensure justice for victims.

She also said male employees should understand how to behave respectfully with their women colleagues. Proper awareness and responsible action by authorities can prevent exploitation and create a safe atmosphere for women.

Mamata Gatti, Chairperson of the Karnataka Geru Development Corporation, said cases of harassment are increasing. She added that parents should teach good values not only to girls but also to boys.

Several officials attended the program.

Dr. Kumar urged allocating over 70% of DMF funds to water projects and improving health, education, and sanitation

DMF fund to boost mining area development

MANDYA

District Collector Dr Kumar has asked that the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Fund be used mainly to help people living in areas affected by mining. Speaking at a meeting with officials from the Mines Department at the Collector's office, he said the fund should focus on improving the day-to-day life of communities impacted by mining.

Dr. Kumar said that over 70 percent of the DMF Fund should be spent on projects directly benefiting these areas. Priority should be given to providing clean drinking water, building water purification systems, and setting up water treatment plants. He also stressed the importance of improving basic facilities such as health, education, and sanitation for the people living there.

He further asked that attention be given to protecting the environment, controlling pollution, and providing skill development opportunities to help residents improve their livelihoods.

Several district officials attended the meeting, including Forest Department DFO Raghu, Mines and Earth Sciences Officer Pushpa, Deputy Director of Industries and Commerce Dinesh, and Environmental Pollution Control Officer Geetha.

The Collector urged everyone involved to work together so that the DMF Fund truly reaches the people who need it the most, improving their lives and creating a healthier, safer, and more prosperous community.

Tribal village gets electricity after 40 years

HUNSUR

In a significant step toward rural development, MLA G.D. Harish Gowda provided electricity to the houses of tribals in Hemmige Hadi, Hanagodu Hobli, Hunsur Taluk, bringing light to a village that had been in the dark for four decades. During the inauguration, he personally lit lamps in the village, symbolizing a new beginning for the residents.

Speaking at the event, Gowda recalled his election promise to the villagers to fulfill their long-standing demand for electricity. "Hemmige Hadi, a forest fringe village where tribals have lived without power for 40 years, now has electricity. Light has entered their homes and lives," he said.

Bidar MLA slams state budget as directionless

BIDAR

Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale has strongly criticized the state budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, describing it as a directionless plan that has failed to meet the expectations of the people.

In a statement released on Friday, the BJP State Secretary said the budget was like a boat that had lost its way, lacking a clear goal or vision for the state's future. He said the total budget size of ₹4.48 lakh crore was filled with confusing statistics that would

not bring real benefits to the common people.

Dr. Beldale alleged that the state's debt burden has reached record levels and warned that the financial condition of the government is becoming weak. According to him, the state's total debt has already crossed ₹8 lakh crore, which could place a heavy financial burden on citizens in the coming years.

He also expressed disappointment that Bidar district has been completely neglected in the budget. Despite having two ministers from the district, he said no major development projects were announced for the region. This has disappointed the people of the border district, who had expected significant support from the government.

The MLA pointed out that no plans were announced to help the victims of the Karanja area, revive the BSSK institution, promote tourism, establish an agriculture college, or bring large industries to generate employment. He also criticized the lack of progress on the Bidar-Nanded railway line and the absence of plans to utilize Godavari basin water.

However, he welcomed the allocation of 25 acres of land for the proposed Vachana University in Basavakalyan and the announcement that work on the new Anubhav Mantapa will be completed this year.

Visionary development budget prioritizes jobs and education

SHIVAMOGGA

Chetan K. Gowda, Chairman of the State Textile Infrastructure Corporation, has described the 2026-27 budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Legislative Assembly as a visionary development budget that gives priority to all sectors.

Highlighting the state government's commitment to employment, Gowda noted that the budget continues the five citizen-centric guarantees while emphasizing the creation of 54,000 government jobs to provide opportunities for unemployed youth. Priority has also been given to generating jobs in the private sector, making this a comprehensive job-focused budget.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has placed special attention on the education sector, including the establishment of the Anantha Murthy Study Chair in the district, underscoring efforts to foster academic growth and future-ready talent. Gowda added that the budget reflects a non-partisan vision for building a bright future for the state and demonstrates the Congress government's pro-people approach to governance and development.

Devotees celebrate Sri Vadiraja Tirtha Aradhanatsava

VIJAYAPURA

The Aradhanatsava of Sri Vadiraja Gurusarvabhoumar was celebrated with deep devotion at Sri Krishna-Vadiraja Math in Vijayapura city. The day began with the Nirmalya Visarjan in the morning, followed by Panchamrutha Abhishekam and silver kavacha flower decorations, performed by Pandit Samirachar, Muttagi Sridharachar, and Haridas, adding spiritual fervor to the event.

A grand chariot festival marked the highlight of the celebrations. The festival was organized under the leadership of the Math's Honorary President Gopal Nayak, Secretary Prakash Akkalkota, and Manager Pandit Vasudevachara. Management Board members Vikas Padaki, V.H.C. Kulkarni, Vijay Joshi, and Ashok Rao actively participated, ensuring smooth proceedings. Several Bhajan Mandals, including Gururaja Sondura, B.J. Joshi, and Anita Padaki Mandals, provided devotional music, enriching the atmosphere of devotion and festivity.

Pandit Gurajachara Gudi Athani delivered the inaugural address, highlighting the achievements and contributions of Sri Vadiraja Gurusarvabhauma. He noted that Vadirajatirthas were both warriors and poets, authoring hundreds of books, including the famous "Rukminis Vijaya" and "Lakshmi Shobhane." Emphasizing the saint's commitment to the welfare of the poor and downtrodden, Athani encouraged devotees to follow his teachings of compassion and devotion.

Vijayapura budget overlooked, local projects ignored

VIJAYAPURA

Vijayapura city has been left disappointed as the 2026-27 state budget failed to address key local projects, said Keshav Prasad S., Member of the Karnataka Legislative Council.

He pointed out that the much-awaited airport has no clear timeline, and funds for the Upper Krishna projects were not allocated. Previous initiatives like the food park and cold storage for grape growers have not progressed and are missing in the current budget. Plans for an international-level multi-purpose stadium and a Sri Lingakai Sri Siddeshwara study center were also ignored. The start of classes at the Government Medical College remains uncertain, and tourism development grants for the city's famous destinations were omitted. Proposals for a wine park, textile park, horticultural markets, and support for Akkamahadevi Women's University to enhance women's education were not included, leaving local hopes unfulfilled. wwPrasad expressed concern that these omissions could slow growth and development in North Karnataka.

Yediyurappa Praises Hunsur Math as Model Constituency

HUNSUR

Former Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa said that the Ukkina Kanthe Math in Hunsur taluk of Mysuru district has become a model centre for spiritual and social service. He was speaking at a special religious program held at Madahalli village in the taluk.

The event marked the 397th worship ceremony of Sri Gurubudiswamy in the divine presence of Samba Sada Shiva Swamiji. On the occasion, the newly constructed building of the math, sixteen renovated seats, the century-old Sri Siddalinga Swamy hall and the Basava Dwara were formally inaugurated.

Addressing the gathering, Yediyurappa said the math has been serving devotees by providing both spiritual guidance and social service. He appreciated the devotees and the government for supporting the development of the institution. He recalled that during his tenure as chief minister, a grant of ₹1 crore was provided for the development of the math. Samba Sada Shiva Swamiji said the math has been serving people for nearly five decades and continues to guide devotees through spiritual teachings. He also acknowledged the support extended by several leaders and donors for the development of the institution.

HYDRATE BEAT HEAT

DHO advises summer health precautions

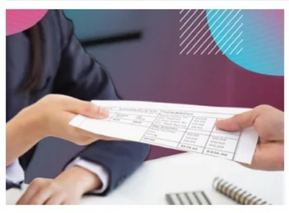
HAVERI

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. M. Jayananda has issued guidelines to help the public stay safe during the summer heat. He stressed that preventive measures are crucial as rising temperatures can adversely affect health.

Dr. Jayananda recommended wearing loose, light-colored cotton clothing and staying hydrated by drinking plenty of clean water, including water mixed with salt and sugar. He also advised consuming fruit juices, coconut water, buttermilk, and panaka to maintain electrolyte balance. Sweating should be wiped with soft cotton cloths, and a diet of warm, unsweetened, sattvic foods is suggested. Breathable slippers are recommended to prevent discomfort.

The DHO warned about the risk of vomiting and diarrhea from contaminated water. He emphasized drinking purified water and seeking immediate attention in case of heat-related emergencies, such as slurred speech, drooling, reddened skin, decreased sweating, high body temperature, or severe breathing difficulties. Patients should be moved to a shaded area, lie down, and cover the body with wet cloths. Emergency services are available at local health centers and can be reached via 108/102.

QUICK READ



Karwar holds compensation distribution program

KARWAR

A compensation distribution program under Section 28(a) of the Land Acquisition Act was held at 3 pm in the hall of the District Magistrate's Office. The event was chaired by the District Incharge Minister, with the presence of Lok Sabha members and the District Magistrate. The Special Land Acquisition Officer of the Naval Base stated that eligible landowners received their due compensation during the program, ensuring transparency and compliance with the land acquisition laws. Local residents appreciated the government's initiative to expedite the process efficiently.

Power outage scheduled in Chitradurga on Mar 8

CHITRADURGA

Due to maintenance work by the Chitradurga City Sub-Division Work and Maintenance Unit-4, there will be power outages in several areas on March 8. Affected areas include Chinmuladri School, Kanaka Nagar, Rural Police Station and Hostels, Basaveshwara Nagar, Bapuji Nagar, Elukroti Layout, Onion Layout, Medehalli, Kodayanahatti, Tamatakallu, and near P.K. Halli limits.

The power cut will last from 10 am to 5 pm. BESCOM Assistant Executive Engineer H. Timmanna has requested residents to cooperate and make necessary arrangements during the outage.

Chikkaballapura Municipal Council Holds Budget Meeting

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Chikkaballapura Municipal Council organized the second preliminary meeting for the 2026-27 budget on March 10 at Sir M. Visvesvaraya Hall. The meeting aimed to hear public grievances, essential demands, and suggestions for the upcoming budget. Citizens, social workers, dignitaries, and heads of various organizations, including NGOs, were invited to participate. Attendees could submit written requests about facilities and services needed in their respective wards. The Municipal Commissioner emphasized that public input is vital to ensure the budget addresses community needs effectively and supports the city's development priorities.

Thousands witness Mulakattamma Brahmarathotsava celebration

Kannika Parameshwari showed devotion carrying the sacred kalasha, while fireworks and decorations lit the sky, captivating devotees and visitors

MAGADI

The Brahmarathotsava of Mulakattamma Devi in Magadi taluk was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm in the presence of thousands of devotees from various districts. The grand religious event attracted large crowds and created a festive atmosphere in the region.

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara and his wife Kannika Parameshwari inaugurated the Brahmarathotsava by offering special prayers to the goddess. Later, they also inaugurated the Rasasanje and cultural programs organized as part of the celebrations.

During the festival, the idol of Mulakattamma Devi was decorated with a silver kavacha. Devotees who arrived in large numbers offered prayers and sought blessings from the goddess.

Kannika Parameshwari displayed devotion by carrying the sacred kalasha during the rituals. Colorful fireworks and decorative displays lit up the sky and attracted the attention of devotees and visitors.

Traditional folk performances including doll dance, Veeragase, Keelukudre and other devotional dances added cultural vibrancy to the event. The crowd became especially enthusiastic when Bigg Boss fame actor Gilli arrived on the stage, prompting police to step in and control the excited youth. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Parameshwara said Mulakattamma Devi is the family deity and a powerful spiritual centre for their family. He recalled childhood memories associated with the temple and said true devotion and pure faith in the goddess help devotees overcome difficulties.

He also said that since large numbers of devotees visit the temple every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday, steps have been taken to provide better basic facilities.

Pilgrim accommodation and a white-topped road around the temple have been developed at a cost of ₹5 crores for the convenience of visitors. Several public representatives, officials and devotees participated in the celebrations.

Farmers block road after officials skip meeting

MAGADI

Hundreds of farmers staged a protest and blocked the Kunigal–Magadi main road on Friday after several officials failed to attend a scheduled farmers' meeting at the taluk office. The meeting was fixed for 11 am to discuss problems faced by farmers in the region. While some department representatives such as the Deputy Tahsildar and officials from agriculture and horticulture departments were present, many key officials, including the Tahsildar, did not arrive even by 1 pm. Officials from BESCOM were also absent, and a junior engineer reportedly failed to give clear answers to farmers' questions.

Angered by the delay and lack of response, farmers led by Taluk Raitha Sangh president Lokesh and other leaders blocked the busy road and shouted slogans against BESCOM and taluk officials. The protest caused long traffic jams, with hundreds of vehicles stranded on both sides of the road. Police later reached the spot, pacified the farmers and cleared the traffic.

Speaking during the protest, Lokesh said farmers are facing serious problems due to irregular electricity supply. Many borewell pump motors have burnt out because of voltage fluctuations. Repairing a motor costs around ₹10,000, which farmers cannot easily afford.

Farmers also complained that several transformers have been removed and private agencies are demanding nearly ₹3 lakhs to install new ones. They questioned how poor farmers could manage such high costs.

They further raised concerns about the unsafe Kunigal–Magadi road, claiming several accidents have occurred and four people from Hospalya village have died.

The civic body anticipates revenue from property tax, rents, permits, licenses, and additional funds via state, central, and commission grants

Ramanagara civic body presents ₹81.98 lakh savings budget

RAMANAGARA

The Ramanagara Municipal Corporation has presented a savings budget of ₹81.98 lakh for the financial year 2026–27, focusing on development works, welfare programs and infrastructure improvement in the city.

Municipal Corporation Chairman K. Seshadri (Shashi) presented the budget during the council meeting held at the corporation office. While explaining the financial plan, he detailed the expected income and proposed expenditure for the coming year.

According to the budget, the corporation has an opening balance of ₹1,506.15 lakh and expects revenue of ₹9,233.05 lakh during the year. This brings the total available funds to ₹10,739.20 lakh, out of which ₹10,657.22 lakh has been earmarked for expenditure.

The civic body expects to receive major income from property tax, shop rent, building permits, business license fees and other local taxes. Additional funds are also expected through state and central government schemes including the 16th Finance Commission grant, State Finance Commission funds and special grants.

The budget gives importance to welfare schemes for workers in the unorganised sector such as auto drivers, street vendors, tailors, weavers, goldsmiths, potters, iron workers and other traditional communities. A grant of ₹30 lakh has been earmarked for public insurance coverage.

Several community welfare measures were announced. These include ₹10 lakh for journalists' insurance, ₹10 lakh for auto drivers' uniform and license renewal, ₹5 lakh for equipment to tailors and ₹3 lakh for Vishwakarma community workers.

Funds have also been set aside for religious festivals, health camps, competitive exam coaching for students, cultural programs and environmental initiatives including planting 5,000 trees.

A solid waste management unit near Harisandra is nearing completion and expected to start within two months. Smart bus stops and solar-powered smart benches will also be installed in public places.

Farmers end hunger strike, plan bigger agitation

CHITRADURGA

A farmer leader who had been on a hunger strike demanding funds for the Bhadra Upper River Project ended his fast on Friday after requests from seers and leaders of various organizations.

The protest had been continuing since March 2 at Onake Obavva Circle in Chitradurga.

Farmer leader K.T. Thippeswamy broke his fast by drinking coconut water offered by Sri Basavalinga Swamiji of Siddayankote Mutt. Several leaders and supporters were present during the moment, which marked the end of the five-day protest.

Speaking later, Thippeswamy said farmers had demanded that the government allocate ₹5,000 crore for the Bhadra Upper River Project in the state budget. Though ministers and MLAs had raised the issue, the budget only mentioned that the project would be completed by 2027 without providing the required funds.

He said farmers were disappointed and would soon hold meetings in different places to decide the next phase of the agitation.

The main demand is to ensure that water flows into the district and that lakes are filled to support agriculture.

Sri Basavalinga Swamiji said it was painful to see farmers fasting. He urged them to adopt other forms of protest to pressurize the government instead of risking their health.

Leaders also highlighted the difficulties faced by farmers. They said groundwater levels have dropped sharply and many areas face drinking water problems. Farmers are struggling due to lack of electricity, water, and fair prices for crops.

Raitha Sangh leader Ichaghatta Siddaveerappa warned that if agriculture collapses, it will affect society as a whole. Leaders demanded more funds and immediate work on the Bhadra project.

State budget prioritizes minority education development

SRINIVASPUR

The 2026-27 Karnataka State Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has given special focus to the education and welfare of minority communities, said Shabbir Ahmed, District Level Committee member of the Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme for Minorities.

Ahmed appreciated the government's vision to empower all sections of society and said the budget contains measures to improve educational opportunities for minority students, especially from rural and economically weaker families.

Among the initiatives, 25 new post-matric hostels with 150-student capacity each will be established, and 25 existing hostels will increase capacity by 50 students.

This will help students from remote villages access better education and accommodation.

The budget also proposes 10 new residential schools named after Sant Shishunala Sharif under the CBSE curriculum, with ₹10 crore allocated for the first year. In addition, 100 Maulana Azad Model Schools and Urdu schools will be upgraded into Karnataka Public School model institutions at a cost of ₹400 crores, improving infrastructure and educational quality.

Ahmed noted that development funds of ₹100 crores have also been earmarked for Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. A monthly honorarium of ₹6,000 will be provided to Dhammacharis of the Buddhist community to promote religious and cultural activities.

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Students urged to focus on mathematics learning

CHIKKABALLAPURA

In today's era of artificial intelligence, students are being encouraged to give greater attention to mathematics, said DIET Principal and Deputy Director (Administration) Munikempegowda. He emphasized that strong math skills are essential for future learning and problem-solving.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the district-level mathematics symposium held at the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Auditorium, Junior College premises. The event

was organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, School Education Department, and Akshara Foundation.

The symposium highlighted the success of the 2025-26 government higher primary school mathematics competitions, conducted as part of the ongoing Mathematics Learning Movement. Since 2017, the program has promoted mathematics learning among students of classes 4, 5, and 6. Mathematics kits have been distributed to 793 government schools across six taluks, and teachers have received specialized training.

This year, competitions were held in 281 schools, with experts preparing question papers, evaluating results, and awarding nine prizes to top-performing students. The program has inspired around six lakh students statewide to develop their math skills. Akshara Foundation Director Vaijayanti presented a detailed report on the competitions, and 25 top-performing schools and cluster CRPs were felicitated by the SDMC President. Narayanaswamy, District President of the Government Employees Association, appreciated the efforts of the foundation in boosting students' confidence in mathematics.

Lecturers, CRPs, office bearers, and department staff attended the program, highlighting the collaborative effort to strengthen mathematics education in the district.

IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
CMIES NO: 1056/2025

BEETWEEN: Sri Shivakumar nayak Suttalli village. Tippur Post, Sasalu Hobli, Doddaballapura **PETITIONER**

AND REGISTRAR OF BIRTH AND DEATHS REPRESENTED, THAHASILDAR DODDABALLAPUR RESPONDENT

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the petitioner filed a petition under section 13(3) of the Regiestration of Birth and Death act:1969, for obating death Icertificate of her deceased Grand Father of the petitioner namely Late Samyanaik S/O Danjyanaik R/at suttahalli village, Thippuru post, saslu hobali, Doddaballapura Taluk, and Bangalore Rural distic, who was died on 31/07/1990 at home i.e. suttahalli village, Thippuru post, sasalu hobali, Doddaballapur Taluk, and Bangaloure rural distic.

Hearing date of the above case is on 09.04.2026 if any person having any claim of objections With this regard they may appear before this Hon'ble court in person/ by pleader on the date meantioned above at about 11.00 AM failing Which the petition will be disposed of ex- perte.

Even my hand and seal of this Hon'ble court on this date. 5.3.26

By the order of the cour
Chief ministerial officer Prl. Civil judge and JMFC Doddaballapur

Advocate for petitioner: **ANANDA KUMAR**, Advocate, No.2 R.N.A Complex 1st Floor, Opp KEB Office T,B Circle Doddaballapur

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IN THE COURT OF THE 2nd ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE, & JMFC AT DODDABALLAPUR
C.Mis.No. 697/2025

Between: Sri. Shivakumar S/o Hanumanthaiah Aged about 50 years, R/at: Sasalu Village Sasalu Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. **PETITIONER**

And: The Tahsildar, Doddaballapura Taluk. RESPONDENT

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13(3) and 14 of Registration of Births and Deaths act 1969, for seeking the death certificate of the grand mother of petitioner by name Smt.Muttamma, W/o Late Sri.Hanumanthaiah @ Kurlappa who died on 15.07.2006 at Sasalu Village, Sasalu Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk.

In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an Advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 16.04.2026 at 11 A.M./ forenoon. In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 6th day of March 2026.

By order of the court
Chief Ministeral Officer, 2nd Addl. Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura

Sri. Ravi.M. Advocate, Court Road, Doddaballapur-561 203.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NARASIMHA RAO S/o RAMAKRISHNA, R/o A-207, 2nd Floor, United Elysium 2, Chikathirupathi Road, Channasandra, K. Channasandra, Kadugodi, Bengaluru, Karnataka560067, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NARASIMHA RAO VELICHETI.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NARASIMHA RAO S/o RAMAKRISHNA R/o 173, Hiriyur camp, Near Water Tank, Amrutha Nagar, Kadlebalu, Davanagere, Davangere, Karnataka-577589, have changed the name of my minor son ABHINEET Y alias ABHINEET YELLISHETI aged 17 years and he shall hereafter be known as ABHINEET VELICHETI.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SAGEER AHMED SAMEERNOORULLA**, S/o. Mohammed Attehaar Miyan, Resident of No.550, 3rd Floor, L T Building Outer Ring Road, Near Horamavu Signal, Dodda Banaswadi, Bengaluru-560043, have changed my name to **SAGEER AHMED NOORULLA**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 06.03.2026 before notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SHRUTHI G R**, Resident of Lakshmi Nilaya Vijayanagar 1st Stage, Virajpet, Kodagu - 571218, Karnataka, have changed my minor son's name from **DIGANTH RAJ** to **G DIGANTH RAJ**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 06.03.2026 before notary C.V. EARAPPA, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VINAYA ROTTI
(Old name)
address:
EKTA NAGAR UNKAL HUBLI.
Has changed my name:
VINAY ROTTI
(new name)
for all purposes.
Vide Affidavit dated:
06/03/2026 before notary public Hubli.

NAME CHANGE

I, **TOUFIQ AHMED**, S/o. Sageer Ahmed Noorulla, Resident of No.550, 3rd Floor, L T Building Outer Ring Road, Near Horamavu Signal, Dodda Banaswadi, Bengaluru-560043, have changed my name to **TOUFIQ AHMED MD**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 06.03.2026 before notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ABDUS SUDIAS**, S/o Inayath, resident of No 10 Modi Road K G F Building Sonnappa Garden DJ Halli Po: Arabic College, Bengaluru - 560045, have changed my name to **ABDUS SUDAIS**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 06.03.2026 before notary C.V. EARAPPA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **HAFSAH FATHIMA**, D/o Faqruddin Ali Ahmed, resident of. No 2387, 7th Cross, Haneefa Masjid Main Road, Kushal Nagar Kadugondanahalli, A C Post, Bangalore-560045, have changed my name to **HAFSAH FATHIMA**, vide affidavit dated: 02.03.2026, before Notary C SHARADA, Bangalore.

Congress Criticises Nitish Exit, Calls It Political Coup

Congress leader attacks BJP after Nitish Kumar's move to Rajya Sabha sparks major political debate

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Thursday criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced his decision to contest the Rajya Sabha elections. Ramesh claimed the development was similar to a political "coup" and accused the BJP of removing Kumar from power.

Taking a sharp dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ramesh compared the situation to an incident involving former US President Donald Trump and Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro. He said, "What Trump did to Maduro, Modi has done to Nitish Kumar," alleging that the BJP had pushed the JD(U) leader out of the chief minister's post. Kumar recently filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha, signalling the end of his long tenure as Bihar's chief minister. With his exit, political observers expect a BJP leader to take over the top post in the state.

Ramesh also said the move betrayed the mandate given by the people of Bihar during the Assembly elections held in November last year. According to him, voters supported Nitish Kumar as chief minister, not a BJP leader.

During the election campaign, Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi had predicted that Kumar might not remain chief minister for long because the BJP intended to replace him, Ramesh said.

The Congress leader pointed out that Kumar had been chief minister for less than four months in his current term before stepping down. He argued that the decision ignored the voters' choice and changed the political leadership in the state.

The Congress has only six MLAs in Bihar, but Ramesh said the party would continue to raise issues concerning the people. He described Kumar's move to the Rajya Sabha as a major betrayal of public trust and democratic mandate.

QUICK READ

India Key Partner for US, Expert Says

NEW DELHI

India is an essential partner for the United States, said Meredith Walker, Chief Economist at the US-based Cyber Future Foundation, during the Raisina Dialogue 2026. She highlighted India's importance in maintaining energy security during ongoing global conflicts. Walker said India must continue buying oil to ensure stability, adding that the US hopes to expand energy trade with India in the future. Experts also praised India's role in promoting accessible artificial intelligence. Bhutan's former Thimphu TechPark CEO Tshering Cigay Dorji said India's AI initiatives help smaller countries benefit from new technologies.

Five Nigerians Deported In Delhi Police Crackdown

NEW DELHI

Five Nigerian nationals staying illegally in India were deported or repatriated by Delhi Police during a crackdown in February, officials said on Friday. Police teams from several stations in Dwarka District conducted the operation after gathering intelligence about foreigners living without valid documents. Three Nigerians were deported by the Uttam Nagar Police, while two others were repatriated by the Anti-Narcotics Cell. After their arrest, they were produced before the Foreigners Regional Registration Office, which ordered their deportation. Authorities said verification drives will continue to identify foreigners overstaying visas in the capital.

Anuj Agnihotri Tops UPSC Civil Services 2025

NEW DELHI

Anuj Agnihotri from Rawatbhata in Rajasthan secured All India Rank 1 in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025, the results of which were announced on Friday. Rajeshwari Suve M ranked second, while Akansh Dhull secured third place. A total of 958 candidates were recommended for appointment across services. Among the top 10 rank holders, three are women, including Rajeshwari, Zinnia Aurora, and Astha Jain. The preliminary exam was held on May 25, 2025, followed by the mains in August and interviews that concluded on February 27, 2026.

India, Japan Discuss Defence Technology And Economic Security

India and Japan held high-level talks to strengthen defence technology cooperation, supply chain security, and collaboration in emerging technologies including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and clean energy.

NEW DELHI

India and Japan held discussions on defence technology cooperation and economic security during a meeting between Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Sadamasa Oue, Special Advisor to the Japanese Prime Minister. The talks were held on Friday as part of efforts to strengthen the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the two leaders exchanged views on expanding cooperation in defence technology and strengthening economic security. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the meeting focused on building stronger ties between the two countries in key strategic sectors.

India and Japan had earlier launched the India-Japan Economic Security Initiative in 2025. The initiative aims to boost cooperation in important sectors and strengthen supply chains for key goods and materials.

It also focuses on diversifying markets and encouraging collaboration in advanced technologies.

Officials said the initiative will support joint projects in several fields, including semiconductors, critical minerals, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, telecommunications, clean energy and other emerging technologies. These projects will be implemented through government and business cooperation under the Dialogue on Economic Security.

Both countries also agreed to exchange policy views and share information on best practices in economic security and technology development. The partnership will encourage resilient supply chains and expand market opportunities for industries in both countries.

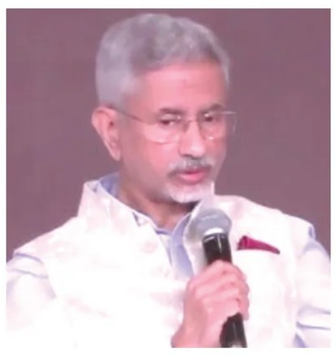
Several agreements support India–Japan cooperation, including the India-Japan Digital Partnership 2.0, Semiconductor Supply Chain Partnership, and mineral resource collaboration. Organisations like JETRO, CII, and JCCII are also involved. Both countries will implement the Japan-India AI Cooperation Initiative and strengthen battery supply chains to support clean energy and future mobility technologies.

The Global South emerges from shared historical experiences, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said

Jaishankar Says World Moving Towards Multipolar Global Power Order

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said the world is moving towards a multipolar system where power is shared among many countries. Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue 2026, he said it was unrealistic to expect the global order created after 1945 to remain unchanged forever.



Jaishankar said global politics has evolved over the past seventy years and change is natural.

He explained that trying to preserve the same world order from earlier decades ignores the forces that drive transformation in international relations. According to him, two major factors will shape global developments in the coming decade. One is rapid technological change, and the other is demographic shifts taking place in different regions of the world.

These forces are altering the balance of influence among nations.

The minister also pointed out that many global discussions still focus heavily on developments in the United States. However, he believes the future international system will be more distributed and not dominated by a single power.

Jaishankar said no country today has complete control over all areas of global influence. Instead, different countries hold strengths in different sectors such as technology, economy, security, and innovation.

He added that modern power is no longer measured only by military strength or economic size. Various regions now contribute differently across sectors, making global power more widely spread.

He concluded that the international system is gradually becoming multipolar as influence continues to shift across nations and sectors.

> External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said global multipolarity is now a lasting reality based on shared historical experiences. Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue 2026, he noted that India's vaccine support to developing nations during COVID-19 showed the real meaning of the Global South. He also said unity within the Global West is changing. According to him, the era of major power "big deals" controlling global decisions is ending, as influence is now more widely shared among nations.

Iran Vows Strong Action To Protect National Sovereignty

MUMBAI

Following the death of Iran's late Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran remains united in defending its sovereignty, said Saeid Reza Mosayeb Motlagh. Motlagh said the nation stands "like a clenched fist" against foreign aggression and will take measures to ensure no one dares violate its territorial integrity again.

He rejected claims of internal instability or irregular succession, clarifying that leadership is determined through the Assembly of Experts, whose members are directly elected by the people. Motlagh emphasised that the Iranian public continues to support the leadership, government, and armed forces, with nightly gatherings demonstrating their unity.

The Consul General condemned a recent maritime attack on an Iranian vessel returning from a military exercise in India, describing it as "unjust" and resulting in over 100 soldiers attaining martyrdom. He also criticised the United States for imposing decades-long sanctions, including on the pharmaceutical sector, which he described as inhumane.

Motlagh highlighted India's potential role in ensuring the safety of Indian nationals in Iran, stating authorities are prepared to facilitate their departure if needed. He stressed that despite domestic criticisms, the Iranian people remain united and ready to defend the country.

He concluded, "As long as we can push the enemy back and stabilise the situation, Iran will continue its courageous and resolute defence." The statement underlines Tehran's firm stance against the United States and Israel and signals ongoing vigilance over national security.

Tamil Nadu Bans Political Activities In Private Schools

CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has banned private schools from hosting political, ideological, or communal activities on their campuses, aiming to maintain schools as neutral academic spaces.

The School Education Department issued an order on March 2, updating the Tamil Nadu Private Schools (Regulation) Rules.

Under the amended rules, school premises—including classrooms, halls, and playgrounds—cannot be used for programs, meetings, campaigns, or instructions by external groups that are political, ideological, or communal.

The ban covers events likely to promote disharmony based on religion, caste, community, language, or race. Importantly, this restriction applies during school hours and also on weekends, public holidays, and vacations.

Non-political and non-sectarian activities, such as blood donation drives, social service initiatives, and cultural events, may still be allowed but require prior permission from the relevant authorities. These events must be conducted under the school's supervision.

Sources said the move follows a recent controversy involving Sri Saraswathi Vidyalaya in Cuddalore.

In December 2025, the school allowed Seva Bharati to conduct a camp during winter holidays. When the Education Department issued a show-cause notice, the school challenged it in the Madras High Court, arguing that regulations only applied during school hours.

The new amendments close this legal gap, ensuring private school infrastructure is used primarily for academic purposes and student welfare. Authorities emphasised that maintaining school campuses as safe, neutral, and focused on education is the key objective behind these changes.

Iran Denies Closing Strait Of Hormuz Amid Tensions

NEW DELHI : Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh has dismissed claims that Tehran has shut the Strait of Hormuz, calling Iran a "responsible power" and a stabilising force in the Persian Gulf. Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue 2026, he clarified that the waterway remains open and there is no immediate plan to block it. Khatibzadeh stressed that Iran plays a key role in ensuring maritime security and continues to act in line with international law and freedom of navigation. He accused the United States of endangering stability in the region while criticising President Donald Trump for calling for leadership change in Iran, calling it a "colonial approach." Describing the ongoing conflict with the US and Israel as an "existential war," the Minister said Iran has faced unprovoked aggression based on false claims. He warned that any strikes originating from American forces would be met with a firm response. Khatibzadeh also accused Mossad of orchestrating "false-flag operations" to widen the conflict to countries like Cyprus, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

FOOD CRISIS

Food Adulteration Crisis Raises Serious Health Concerns

NEW DELHI

Food adulteration in Pakistan has reached alarming levels, posing a serious threat to public health and daily life, according to a recent report. The report said the problem is now so widespread that it affects the safety of many basic food items used in homes.

According to the report, adulteration has been found in several products, including milk, cheese, spices, cooking oil, meat and bottled water. Many of these items are reportedly mixed with harmful substances before reaching consumers.

A recent observation by the Lahore High Court brought attention to the issue. The court described the situation as a "horrifying picture" while rejecting bail for a person accused of transporting 2,400 litres of adulterated milk. The case highlighted the seriousness of the growing food safety crisis in the country. Findings from the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority revealed that milk samples tested in Karachi contained formalin and excessive phosphate levels. These chemicals make the milk unsafe for human consumption. Formalin, commonly used as an industrial preservative, is particularly dangerous because it can cause serious health problems.

The report said milk is often mixed with substances like water, detergents, vegetable fats, urea and other chemicals. Experts believe this reflects serious regulatory failures rather than isolated incidents. Fake food products made by unlicensed producers are also common in markets, often copying popular brands. Poor hygiene across the supply chain, from farms to shops, increases health risks such as stomach illness, liver and kidney damage. The report added that government crackdowns are usually temporary and penalties are too weak to prevent repeat offences.

Cong Slams Modi Govt Over Weak Diplomatic Approach

Congress leaders accuse the Modi government of weakening India's diplomatic position and surrendering strategic space globally

NEW DELHI

The Congress party on Friday strongly criticised the foreign policy of the government led by Narendra Modi, accusing it of weakening India's diplomatic independence and global standing. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said India's strategic autonomy and sovereignty are facing serious challenges due to the government's approach to international relations.

Kharge praised the diplomatic legacy of former Prime Ministers such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He said previous leaders maintained India's independent foreign policy and resisted pressure from other countries. According to Kharge, the current government has compromised India's diplomatic strength in areas including trade, oil imports, and global partnerships.

Referring to the recent US decision to allow India to purchase Russian oil temporarily, Kharge said the language used suggested India needed permission, which he described as unusual for a country with strong international standing.

He also criticised statements by former US President Donald Trump regarding ceasefire developments during Operation Sindoor and claimed the Indian government remained silent.

Kharge further alleged that the government reduced oil imports from countries such as Iran and Russia due to external pressure.

He argued that such decisions indicate that India's foreign policy space is shrinking.

Experts Urge India To Diversify Oil Sources

NEW DELHI

Global diplomats and policy experts at the Raisina Dialogue 2026 highlighted the growing importance of India's energy independence as geopolitical tensions reshape global oil markets.

The discussion followed a decision by the United States Department of the Treasury to grant a temporary 30-day waiver allowing Indian refineries to purchase Russian oil already stranded at sea.

The move came amid disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent described India as an "essential partner" and said the waiver was meant to ensure stable global energy supply.

Jaroslaw Cwiek-Karpowicz, Director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, said India's reliance on Russian crude is understandable but diversification is necessary. He warned that Russia's policies in Europe remain dangerous and encouraged India to expand oil imports from regions such as South America, Brazil, the Caribbean and Africa.

Cwiek-Karpowicz also pointed to growing cooperation between Russia and China, saying the partnership raises global security concerns. He noted that Russia continues receiving financial and technological support from China, as well as assistance from North Korea and Iran.

Global leaders at Raisina Dialogue stress India's energy independence, urging diversification of oil imports while balancing ties with Russia and Western partners amid changing geopolitical conditions.

Frantisek Ruzicka, Deputy Secretary-General at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said strong relations between India and the United States are helping address global challenges.

He added that the international community trusts India to make balanced decisions regarding its energy partnerships. Meanwhile, former Austrian Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg said India's global role has grown significantly in recent decades.

He stressed that every country has the right to choose its energy suppliers, while acknowledging that the global energy landscape is rapidly changing.

MP Launches Saraswati Abhiyan To Bring Back Dropout Girls

BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has launched 'Saraswati Abhiyan' to bring school dropout girls back into education and improve their future opportunities.

The campaign has been started by the Madhya Pradesh Women and Child Development Department under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme. It aims to help girls who left school due to social, family or financial problems return to studies. Under the programme, girls will be allowed to appear for Class 8, 10 and 12 examinations through the Madhya Pradesh State Open School system. They will receive study materials, guidance, contact classes and mentoring support to complete their education.

Officials said the initiative will help many girls continue their studies and improve their chances of getting jobs or higher education.

According to the National Family Health Survey, many girls in the state drop out before completing Classes 8, 10 or 12. After leaving school, they often do not get another chance to continue their studies, which affects their future opportunities.

To address this issue, the department will conduct a statewide survey to identify girls who have dropped out of school. These students will then be enrolled in the open school system so they can continue their education.

A state-level workshop on the programme and related initiatives will be held in Bhopal on March 10 in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

QUICK READ

Fuel Shortage Rumours Trigger Panic Buying In UP

LAKHIMPUR KHERI

Rumours of a fuel shortage due to the ongoing West Asia conflict caused panic among residents in several parts of Lakhimpur Kheri on Friday, leading to long queues at petrol pumps. Many people rushed to buy petrol and diesel in areas such as Nighasan, Pallia and Bhira. However, District Supply Officer Anjani Kumar Singh said the rumours were false and confirmed that petrol, diesel and LPG stocks were sufficient. District Magistrate Durga Shakti Nagpal also urged residents not to panic, assuring that fuel supply in the district remains normal.

Two Snatchers Arrested In Nand Nagri

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police arrested two men for allegedly snatching a mobile phone in the Nand Nagri area of north-east Delhi. The incident took place on February 25 near Gagan Cinema when Sameer, a 25-year-old from Ghaziabad, was leaving a parking lot after parking his tempo. Two men on a motorcycle approached from behind, snatched his phone and fled. Police registered a case and launched an investigation. Based on local inputs, officers arrested Tushar alias Tissu, 22, and later his associate Vikram, 29. The stolen phone and motorcycle used in the crime were recovered.

UP Plans Sarus Circuit To Protect State Bird

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced a new plan to protect the Sarus Crane, the state bird, and promote eco-tourism in important wetland areas. The government led by Yogi Adityanath aims to develop a "Sarus Circuit" in the districts of Mainpuri and Etawah to conserve the bird and protect its natural habitat.

The Sarus crane, known as the tallest flying bird in the world, mainly lives in the wetlands of the Gangetic plains. Its breeding grounds are mostly found in districts like Mainpuri, Etawah, Etah and Aligarh. However, changes in wetlands and human activities have created threats to the bird's survival in recent years. Under the new plan, several wetlands in Mainpuri such as Kirthua, Sahas, Kurra Jarawan, Soj and Saman will be included in the circuit. Wetland areas in Sarsai Nawar and Parauli Ramayan in Etawah will also be developed as part of the project.

Government of Karnataka
BENGALURU URBAN ZILLA PANCHAYAT
Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking Water & Sanitation Division,
First Floor, Zilla Panchayat Building, S. Kariyappa Road,
Banashankari (Near Banashankari Temple) Bengaluru-560070.
No.EE/RDW&SD/BNG(U)/TND/22/2025-26 Date: 06.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders are invited through Karnataka Public procurement portal for the Works approved Under Various Head of grants for the year **2025-26** Under Two Cover System. The Tender Documents can be obtained and submitted on or before **13.03.2026 upto 4.00 pm.** For further details contact the above address during office hours or visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Rural Drinking Water & Sanitation Division,
Bengaluru Urban Dist, Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/Shirdi Sai/6066/2025-26

Executive Engineer
Public Works Department
No.1 Building Division, S.J.P. Campus,
Bengaluru. Ph: 080-22255210
No. EE/Bld.1/AE- 1&2/LH-VVT/2025-26/81 Date: 05.03.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

The above Department invites Tenders through e-procurement portal of GoK **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** from eligible Tenderers for **Providing Painting, Plaster Patches, Water Proofing, Curtain Rods, Renovation of Bathrooms, Providing Wall Tiles Floor Tiles, Repairing wardrobe, Aluminum Works, Providing Mosquito Mesh, Repairs of door and windows, Providing Steel Stand, Overhead Water Tank, Sanitary Fittings, Renovation of Kitchen, Fitting, Polishing works, Repair and Grouting of Toilet Tile Joints, Crack Filling, Wooden partition Polishing works and other development works, total of 33 works at various notified places in Bengaluru.** Approx. value of work: Min. **Rs. 2.37 lakhs,** Max. **Rs. 40.70 lakhs.** EMD: **Min. Rs. 1,100/-, Max. Rs. 64,600/-.** Cost of Document: As in e-portal. Period of Completion for each work: 2 Months (including rainy season) for each work. Last date for downloading Tender through e-procurement portal and submission through online: **13.03.2026 up to 4.00 P.M.** Date of opening the Tender: as per e-procurement guidelines. Further information, brief details of the works, approx. amount, EMD, Reservation, etc. can be obtained from the above office or from e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
DIPR/DD-C.P/6046/KSMCA/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer**

ಪುರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಚನ್ನರಾಯಪಟ್ಟಣ, ಹಾಸನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.
Email:itstaff_ulb_channarayapatna@yahoo.co.in, Phone:08176-255411
ನಂ:ಪು.ಸ.ಚ./ಪಅ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/01/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 04–03–2026

"ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ"

ಚನ್ನರಾಯಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪುರಸಭೆ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ 2021–22 ಮತ್ತು 2022–23ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ 15 ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು ನಿಧಿ ಉಳಿತಾಯದ ಅನುದಾನ ಮತ್ತು ಪುರಸಭಾ ಅನುದಾನ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ 1999 ಮತ್ತು 2000 ನಿಯಮದಂತೆ, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ, ಮತ್ತು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕೊರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಸೆಲ್, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ರವರಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರುಗಳಿಂದ ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಆಸಕ್ತ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ತಮ್ಮ ದರ ನಮೂದಿಸಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕೊರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ (Visit:https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/) ಪೊರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಿಗಧಿಪಡಿಸಿದ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳಂದು ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ ಹಾಗೂ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಪುರಸಭೆ ಚನ್ನರಾಯಪಟ್ಟಣ ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್ www.channarayapatnatown.mrc.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ವೀಕ್ಷಿಸಬಹುದು. ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಡಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಶೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳು ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿವೆ. 1.ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು ಚಾಲ್ತಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 04–03–2026 ರಿಂದ 20–03–2026 ರವರೆಗೆ. 2.ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 20–03–2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ರವರೆಗೆ. 3.ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ಡನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23–03–2026 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11–00 ಗಂಟೆ ನಂತರ. ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿನ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ) ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ) 1.DMA/2025-26/SE6246/CALL-2 ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)73.20 ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)141000/– 2.DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55828 ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)2.95 ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)6150/– 3.DMA/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT55543 ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)29.90 ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)50600/– 4.DMA/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT55545 ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)7.30 ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)15500/–

ಸಹಿ/–ಶ್ರೀ ಜಗದೀಶ ಗಂಗಣ್ಣನವರ್
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, ಪುರಸಭೆ ಚನ್ನರಾಯಪಟ್ಟಣ

ಸಹಿ/–ಶ್ರೀ ಆರ್.ಯತೀಶ್ ಕುಮಾರ್
K.M.A.S ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಪುರಸಭೆ,
ಚನ್ನರಾಯಪಟ್ಟಣ
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/1152/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Gandhinagar Division,
2nd Floor, BMP Complex, Dhanavantri Road, Bengaluru-560009.
No. EE/GNR/TEND/E-PROC/013/2025-26 Date: 06-03-2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

Short Term Tender Notification (Only through GoK KPP Portal)
The Executive Engineer, Gandhinagar Division, BCCC, Bengaluru on behalf the Commissioner, BCCC invites item rate tenders from eligible contractors registered in BCCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Govt. Organisations for the following services.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Providing PMC Services for the works of Comprehensive Development of asphalt roads and repairs to concrete roads and Major connecting ward roads and improvements to road side drains, footpath and allied works in ward jurisdiction in Ward No. 122, Dattatreya Temple and 128-Chickpet.
	Project Cost: **Rs. 12.55 lakhs.** EMD : **Rs. 32,000/-.**
2	Providing PMC Services for the works of Comprehensive Development of asphalt roads and repairs to concrete roads and Major connecting ward roads and improvements to road side drains, footpath and allied works in ward jurisdiction in Ward No. 124, Subhashnagar and 125-Okalipuram.
	Project Cost: **Rs. 12.56 lakhs.** EMD : **Rs. 32,000/-.**
3	Providing PMC Services for the works of Comprehensive Development of asphalt roads and repairs to concrete roads and Major connecting ward roads and improvements to road side drains, footpath and allied works in ward jurisdiction in Ward No. 126 Binnypet and 127-Cottonpet.
	Project Cost: **Rs. 12.56 lakhs.** EMD : **Rs. 32,000/-.**
4	Providing PMC Services for the work to Providing Resurfacing and Improvements to Footpath and drains in Arterial, Sub Arterial and Roads connecting to Major road in Gandhinagar Constituency.
	Project Cost: **Rs. 33.62 lakhs.** EMD : **Rs. 85,000/-.**

Calendar of Events: **(1)** RFP documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 10.03.2026. (2)** Date of Pre-bid meeting : **18.03.2026 at 4.00 pm at the above office. (3)** Last date for submission of completed documents: **20.03.2026 on or before 4.30 pm. (4)** Date of opening of Technical proposal : **23.03.2026 at 12.30 pm.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Gandhinagar Division, BCCC

VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAMA LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
Office of the Executive Engineer VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division, No.1 Sakaleshpur - 573134 Ph: 08173-244454, e-mail: eeypdn1@gmail.com
Tender Notification No: EE/YP/VJNL/DIV-01/TN-07 (Call-3)/2025-26/1891 Dated: 04.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO- 07(Call-3)/2025-26 Dated:04.03.2026 Ref: 1.VJNL/YP/EE/D1/SKP/TND-07/2025-26/651 Dated:22.08.2025 2.VJNL/YP/EE/D1/SKP/TND-07(Call-2)/2025-26/1691 Dated: 30.01.2026
PERCENTAGE TENDER NOTIFICATION (TWO TENDER DOCUMENT SYSTEM) (Only through kppp portal system)

"Percentage" tenders through kpppportal for 04 worksCall-3 are invited by the Executive Engineer, VJNL, YP Division, No.1, Sakaleshapura on behalf of Managing Director, VisvesvarayaJalaNigama Ltd., Registered office, Bangalore from thePWD registered eligible contractors who fulfill the pre-qualification conditions as per the published bid documents for the work. The amount put to tender of Rs. 283.86 Lakhs. The contractors can download and submit the completed bid documents for as per the Calendar of events mentioned below.

Sl No	Sl No of works as per Tender Notification	Indent No's of works	The bidder can access & download the tender documents	Last date of Submission of completed Tender Documents	Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid
1	01	407(Call-3)	07.03.2026 to 16.03.2026, up to 5.30 pm	16.03.2026, 5.30 pm	18.03.2026, 11.00 Am

The technical bid (Cover-I) will be opened at the office of the Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division, No.1, Sakaleshapura through kppp portal.Details such as Amount put to tender/EMD amount/ Qualification of bidders/ Tender Conditions etc can be obtained through kppp portalhttps://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home. Financial bids will be opened after Technical bid approval or on the date specified in the kppp portal, whichever is later. The authority competent to accept the tenders shall have the right of rejecting all or any of the tenders without assigning any reasons and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender. Corrigendum/addendum will be published in the kpppportal for all modifications or corrections if any. Any further information required may be obtained from the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-Executive Engineer, VJNL, YP Division, No.1, Sakaleshpura
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/1158/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ವಿಜಯಪುರ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ
ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08352–276996, ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್: 08352–276984, ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್:www.vijayapura.uda.gov.in
ನಂ: ನಪ್ರಾವಿ/ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ/ಟೆಂಡರ/2025–26/2232 ದಿನಾಂಕ:03.03.2026

ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿಸಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ ಅರ್ಹ ದರ್ಜೆಯ ಯಾವತ್ತೂ ಸಿವಿಲ್ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಗೆ ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿಸುವದೇನೆಂದರೆ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರದಿಂದ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಕಾಣಿಸಿದ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ ಕೆ.ಡಬ್ಲೂ–4 ರ ನಿಬಂಧನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಐಟಂವಾರು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಾರಣ ಇಚ್ಛೆಯುಳ್ಳ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ತಮ್ಮ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಕುರಿತು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ (**https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನ ಮೂಲಕ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ ಅಥವಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರದ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯದ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಚೇರಿಯ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ www.vijayapura.uda.gov.in ನಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೂಂದೂಡಿಕೆ, ರದ್ದತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮರು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಕುರಿತು ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವದು.

ಅ. ನಂ.	ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಹೆಸರು	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ	ಯೋಜನಾ ವೆಚ್ಚ (ರೂ.ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ.ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ.ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	ಕೆಲಸದ ಅವಧಿ
1	ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ವಾ ನಂ 10 ರ ಗಚ್ಚಿನಕಟ್ಟಿ ಕಾಲೋನಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಳೆ ನೀರಿನ ಚರಂಡಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪಡಿಸುವುದು. VUDA/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT78	16.03.2026	**190.00**	**160.44 (ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ)**	**2.41**	**9 ತಿಂಗಳು**
2	ವಿಜಯಪುರ ನಗರದ ಸರದಾರ ವಲ್ಲಭಬಾಯಿ ಪಟೇಲ್ ರಸ್ತೆಯ ಪಕ್ಕದಲ್ಲಿರುವ (ರಾಮನಗರ) ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪಡಿಸಿದ ವಸತಿ ಬಡಾವಣೆ ಹತ್ತಿರ ಇರುವ ಜಂಕ್ಷನ್ ಸುಧಾರಣೆ (ಬಸ್ ಶೆಲ್ಟರ್, ಕ್ರಾಸ ಡ್ರೇನ್, ಹೊರಚರಂಡಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ) ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ. VUDA/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT79	30.03.2026	**250.00**	**210.82 (ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ)**	**3.20**	**9 ತಿಂಗಳು**

ಸಹಿ/– (ರಾಜಶೇಖರ ಡಂಬಳ, ಕೆ.ಎ.ಎಸ್)
ಆಯುಕ್ತರು,
ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ

ಸಹಿ/– (ಡಾ॥ ಗಂಗಾಧರ ಎಸ್ ಸಂಬಣ್ಣಿ)
ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರು,
ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/777/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

Formula One season begins in Melbourne amid uncertainty and regulation changes

New regulations, geopolitical tensions and shifting team hierarchy shape season opener

MELBOURNE

The 2026 season of Formula One roared to life at the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on Friday, but the start of the championship has been overshadowed by several uncertainties surrounding the sport.

As fans streamed into Albert Park for the opening practice sessions of the season, discussions ranged from new technical regulations and reshuffled team competitiveness to concerns about upcoming races in the Middle East amid rising geopolitical tensions.

One of the biggest issues facing the sport is the possible postponement or cancellation of the Bahrain and Saudi Arabian races scheduled for April, as regional instability involving the United States, Israel and Iran has complicated travel and raised safety concerns. Motorsport's governing body, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), and the sport's commercial rights holder are closely monitoring the situation, with a decision expected soon.

On the sporting front, the 2026 season marks the beginning of a radical new technical era. The latest generation of cars features sweeping changes to both chassis and power units, with a near 50:50 split between the turbocharged 1.6-litre V6 engine and electrical power generated through energy recovery systems. The transformation has forced drivers to adapt to a new, often counterintuitive driving style.

Early indications suggest a fascinating battle at the front of the grid. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc topped the final pre-season test in Bahrain, narrowly ahead of Mercedes rookie Kimi Antonelli. However, Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team is widely viewed as the early favourite, with reports suggesting a potential engine advantage.

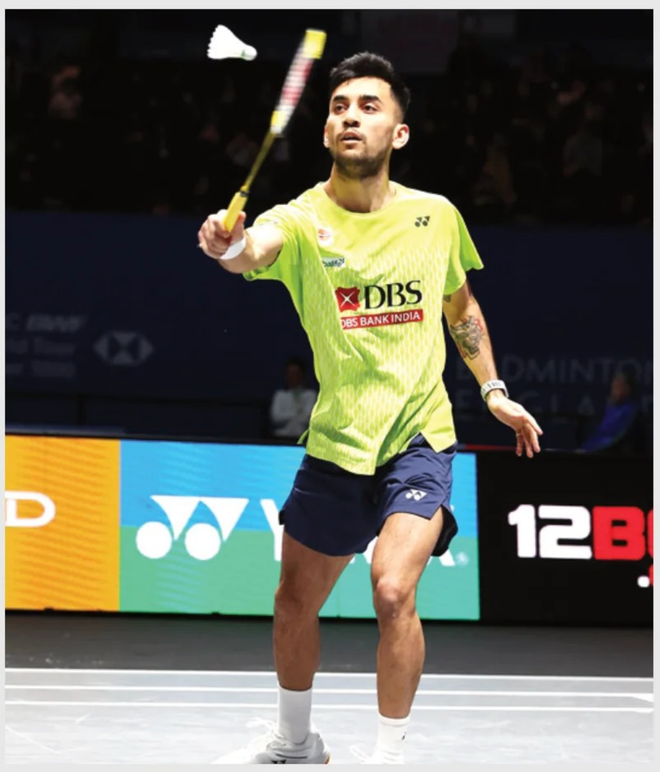
If Mercedes delivers on its promise, experienced British driver George Russell could spearhead the team's challenge for early victories.

Ferrari, meanwhile, hopes to return to winning ways in Australia with support from seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, who believes the team has made significant progress during winter testing.

Local attention, however, is firmly fixed on Oscar Piastri. The McLaren F1 Team driver is seeking redemption after narrowly missing last season's title to teammate Lando Norris. Australian fans are eager to see him become the first home driver to win the race in Melbourne.

Reigning champion Max Verstappen and his Red Bull Racing squad are also expected to remain competitive, although the Dutch star admitted the team is still uncertain about its true pace.

With new regulations, shifting rivalries and global uncertainties, Formula One's latest campaign begins with intrigue both on and off the track.



Lakshya Sen storms into All England Q/F after 3 game battle

Indian shuttler shows grit to defeat Ng Ka Long in marathon clash.

BIRMINGHAM

India's Lakshya Sen produced a determined and tactically sharp performance to defeat Hong Kong's Ng Ka Long Angus and enter the men's singles quarterfinals of the All England Open Badminton Championships in Birmingham.

The world No. 12 Indian, who had lost all three of his previous encounters against the Hong Kong shuttler, overcame a tense battle to register a 21-19, 21-23, 21-10 victory in a pulsating round-of-16 clash. The match lasted over an hour and featured long rallies, sharp exchanges and dramatic momentum shifts.

Lakshya, a finalist in the 2022 edition and the BWF World Championships bronze medallist in 2021, started cautiously but soon found his rhythm. After trailing 4-6 in the opening game, he stepped up his attacking play and moved ahead 15-11 with aggressive returns and precise placement.

Despite Ng Ka Long narrowing the gap late in the first game, Lakshya kept his composure. At 19-19, the Indian produced a powerful jump smash to earn a game point and sealed the opener when his opponent hit wide.

The second game appeared to be heading Lakshya's way as he built an 11-4 lead at the interval and later extended it to 17-12. However, Ng Ka Long mounted a spirited comeback, winning crucial rallies and saving multiple match points before forcing a decider at 23-21.

Resetting mentally after the setback, Lakshya dominated the third game. He raced to a 6-2 lead and maintained relentless pressure with superb defence and controlled attacking play. Clever net deception and sharp cross-court shots helped him extend the lead to 14-6 as his opponent began committing errors.

With the rallies growing shorter, Lakshya accelerated the pace and surged to 18-7 before closing out the match comfortably when Ng Ka Long sent a return long.

"I was prepared to just go all out in the third set and I'm happy with the way I played," Lakshya said after the match.

Lakshya will next face either China's sixth seed Li Shi Feng or Ireland's Nhat Nguyen for a place in the semifinals.

Trump honours Messi & Inter Miami after MLS Cup triumph

WASHINGTON

White House ceremony celebrates Miami's championship season and football's growing influence in United States.

U.S. President Donald Trump honoured Argentine superstar Lionel Messi and his teammates from Inter Miami CF at the White House following the club's victory in the 2025 MLS Cup.

Messi led the delegation as Miami players, head coach Javier Mascherano and team co-owner Jorge Mas stood alongside the president during the ceremony in Washington. The event celebrated Inter Miami's landmark season and its growing role in elevating the profile of football in the United States.

Trump began his remarks by briefly addressing U.S. military actions in West Asia before turning his focus to the team's achievements and the impact of global football stars on the American sporting landscape.

Recalling the influence of Brazilian legend Pelé during his time with the New York Cosmos in the 1970s, Trump said football had long held the potential to captivate American audiences. "I watched Pelé play," Trump said during the ceremony. "You may be better than Pelé. Pelé was pretty good."

The Inter Miami squad presented the president with gifts, including a customised No. 47 jersey from the club's distinctive pink kit, referencing Trump's status as the 47th President of the United States. In return, Trump praised several Miami players, including Uruguayan striker Luis Suárez, Argentine midfielder Rodrigo De Paul and young attacker Tadeo Allende.

Highlighting Messi's influence, Trump noted the expectations that came with the Argentine star's arrival in Major League Soccer.

"Leo, you came in and you won," he said. "There was a lot of pressure on you because you were expected to win."

Inter Miami's successful season included a 3–1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps FC in the MLS Cup final. The club also registered a historic 2–1 win over Portuguese side FC Porto in the FIFA Club World Cup, marking the first time a North American team defeated a European club in official competition.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mas credited the team's rapid rise since its 2020 debut to hard work and belief. He said Inter Miami's achievements demonstrated that American clubs could compete on the global stage.

Mas added that while Messi's presence had transformed the club, the entire squad had played a crucial role in reshaping football culture across the United States.

Indian world champion struggles for momentum with two rounds remaining

Gukesh held to draw by Maghsoodloo, remains last in Prague Masters standings

PRAGUE

Reigning world champion D. Gukesh was once again denied his first victory at the Prague International Chess Festival after Iran's Parham Maghsoodloo forced a draw in the seventh round of the Masters section here.

With only two rounds left in the tournament, the 19-year-old Indian finds himself at the bottom of the standings with two points from seven games. His campaign so far has included four draws and three defeats, leaving the youngest world champion in chess history searching for a breakthrough result.

Playing with the black pieces, Gukesh opted for the solid Berlin Defence against Maghsoodloo and managed to obtain a stable position in the early stages of the game. The Iranian Grandmaster preferred a cautious approach, maintaining balance on the board and preventing any sharp complications.

As the middlegame unfolded, black mobilised his queenside pawns while white ensured adequate central control, resulting in a largely balanced struggle. Neither player managed to create decisive winning chances, and after manoeuvring carefully through the endgame phase, the players agreed to a draw after 49 moves.

Meanwhile, fellow Indian Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram, the defending champion, also settled for a draw against Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Yakubboev. The result left Aravindh on an even score of 3.5 points after seven rounds.

Germany's Vincent Keymer was the only player to register a win in the round, defeating Spain's David Anton Guijarro. At the top of the standings, Dutch Grandmaster Jorden van Foreest maintained a slender lead, staying half a point ahead of his closest challengers — Czech Republic's David Navara and Uzbekistan star Nodirbek Abdusattorov.

In the Challengers section, India's Divya Deshmukh continued her steady run, drawing with Denmark's Jonas Buhl Bjerre to move to 3.5 points. Veteran Grandmaster Surya Shekhar Ganguly finally secured his first victory of the event, defeating China's Jiner Zhu.

With two rounds remaining in Prague, the spotlight will remain on Gukesh as he attempts to salvage a difficult tournament with a late surge.

Gambhir's 'One Tactical Move' That McCullum's England Didn't See Coming

MUMBAI

India head coach Gautam Gambhir delivered a tactical masterclass as India national cricket team defeated England national cricket team by seven runs in the semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, securing a place in the final against New Zealand national cricket team.

The victory was built on clever match-ups, a fluid batting order and astute bowling changes that left England struggling to adapt throughout the contest. Gambhir, who has often argued that fixed batting positions in T20 cricket are "overrated," demonstrated the value of flexibility in the high-stakes knockout match.

After England captain Harry Brook won the toss and opted to field, India captain Suryakumar Yadav admitted he would have preferred to bat first. However, India's batting approach soon justified that decision.

The defining tactical move came in the 10th over when England leg-spinner Adil Rashid dismissed opener Ishan Kishan. Instead of sending in Suryakumar at No. 4, India promoted left-hander Shivam Dube to counter Rashid's leg-spin.

The move paid immediate dividends. While Sanju Samson played cautiously at the other end, Dube launched an aggressive assault on Rashid, smashing 22 runs off just eight deliveries, including three towering sixes. The burst of scoring disrupted England's bowling plans and forced Brook to rethink his strategy. India also maintained a left-right batting combination to keep England's bowlers unsettled. After Samson departed, Hardik Pandya was sent in to partner Dube, ensuring the pressure remained on the opposition.

Another calculated decision involved holding back Tilak Varma for the death overs, where his ability against high pace bowlers such as Jofra Archer was expected to prove valuable.

Wasteful East Bengal held to goalless draw by FC Goa

KOLKATA

East Bengal FC squandered several scoring opportunities as they were held to a frustrating goalless draw by visiting FC Goa in their Indian Super League encounter at the Salt Lake Stadium.

Despite enjoying greater attacking momentum throughout the contest, East Bengal failed to find a way past Goa goalkeeper Hrithik Tiwari, whose alert goalkeeping and a touch of luck helped the visitors secure a valuable point away from home.

The home side began brightly and looked the more threatening team in the first half, creating multiple promising moves but lacking precision in front of goal. Their best opportunity arrived in the 27th minute when winger Bipin Singh delivered an excellent cross from the left flank that found striker Youssef Ezzejjari inside the penalty area. The Spanish forward timed his run perfectly but failed to keep his close-range volley down as the ball sailed over the crossbar.

East Bengal came close again just before halftime when midfielder Basim Rashid attempted a powerful long-range effort in the 42nd minute. The dipping shot forced Hrithik into an awkward save attempt, but the crossbar ultimately came to the goalkeeper's rescue as the ball bounced away.

FC Goa also had a moment of promise earlier in the half. In the 41st minute, forward Boris Singh Thangjam broke through the East Bengal defence and fired a close-range shot, only to see his effort crash against the crossbar.

For much of the game, Goa relied on a compact defensive structure, allowing East Bengal to dominate possession while remaining disciplined at the back. The visiting side absorbed sustained pressure as the hosts repeatedly searched for a breakthrough that never arrived.

Although East Bengal pushed forward in the second half with increased urgency, Goa's organised defence and Hrithik's composure between the posts ensured the deadlock remained intact until the final whistle.

Alcaraz says team feels 'different' after Ferrero split

WASHINGTON

Spanish tennis star Carlos Alcaraz has acknowledged that his team "feels a little bit different" following his shock split with long-time coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, ending a highly successful partnership that lasted seven years.

The pair parted ways in December last year, just weeks before the start of the 2026 tennis season, bringing to a close one of the most productive player–coach relationships in modern tennis. During their time together, Ferrero guided Alcaraz to 24 career titles, including six Grand Slam triumphs.

Ferrero had been a central figure in Alcaraz's development since the Spaniard turned professional at the age of 15. His departure surprised many within the tennis world, particularly given the pair's consistent success on the ATP Tour.

Speaking to Eurosport, Alcaraz admitted that although most members of his support staff remain unchanged, the absence of Ferrero is still noticeable. "I would say it is what it is," Alcaraz said. "Obviously, I wouldn't say it's a new team. It's mostly the same members; we just restructured a little bit. The members are the same as before; we're just missing one."

"Every time I come back to a tournament I played last year, it feels a little bit different. You can feel it a bit, but we try to feel as comfortable as possible on and off the court," he added.

Following Ferrero's exit, long-time team member Samuel López was promoted to the role of chief coach. López has been part of Alcaraz's coaching setup since 2024 and is now responsible for leading the Spaniard's preparations on the tour.

While Alcaraz has largely remained reserved about the separation, Ferrero has spoken openly in several interviews about the circumstances behind the split. The former world No. 1 suggested that advice from people around Alcaraz and a contractual disagreement contributed to the decision. Ferrero also revealed recently that he had unfollowed Alcaraz on social media following the Spaniard's victory at the Australian Open earlier this year, explaining that he wanted some distance after the end of their professional relationship.

QUICK READ

Qatar Airways Extends Flight Suspension Amid Conflict

Doha

Qatar Airways has extended the temporary suspension of its flights as Qatari airspace remains closed due to the ongoing West Asia conflict. The airline said services will restart once the authorities declare the airspace safe. Meanwhile, Etihad Airways has resumed limited commercial flights from Abu Dhabi, operating select routes to major cities in Asia, Europe and North America until March 19. Passengers will be rebooked where possible. The crisis escalated after a US-Israel strike killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, followed by Iranian drone and missile attacks across the region.

Two Bodies Found In Balochistan

Balochistan

The bodies of two missing men were found in the Panjgur district of Balochistan, raising fresh concerns about alleged enforced disappearances in the region. The Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) accused Pakistani security forces of involvement and criticised their actions.

One victim, Yahya Baloch, a 17-year-old student, was reportedly taken from his home on March 3 without any warrant. His body was later found near a Frontier Corps camp in Panjgur. Another man, also named Yahya Baloch, a driver from Parom, had been missing since October. His body was discovered in Washbud on March 3.

Taliban Claims Killing 30 Pakistani Soldiers

Kabul

Authorities in Afghanistan claimed that 30 Pakistani soldiers were killed during clashes along the Durand Line border. According to reports, fighting took-place in Shorabak district of Kandahar province. Enayatullah Khwarazmi, spokesperson for the Taliban Defence Ministry, said Taliban fighters captured a Pakistani military outpost during the clash and later destroyed it with explosives. He also claimed that five Pakistani posts were taken over in the Dand Patan area of Paktia province. Reports said Taliban fighters entered the Top Sar Khwuch Karam and Anzerki Sarposts.

Pak's Actions Raise Concerns Amid Rising Iran Conflict

New report raises concerns about Pakistan's growing involvement in regional tensions linked to the ongoing Iran conflict

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's role in the rising conflict around Iran is drawing concern after reports claimed that Islamabad allowed the United States to use bases for recent drone strikes inside Iran.

The report by the International Business Times said this was not an isolated development. It claimed Pakistan had earlier cooperated with Washington by sharing intelligence linked to possible strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities in the past.

Such moves place Pakistan within a growing strategic alignment where short-term political and economic benefits may be valued more than long-term regional stability, the report suggested.

The analysis also pointed to Pakistan's decision to join the Gaza Board of Peace along with Saudi Arabia and Qatar. On paper the step appears humanitarian and supportive of peace.

However, critics believe it could become a diplomatic cover that shows concern for Gaza while indirectly aligning with powers unwilling to hold Israel accountable for its military actions.

The report argued that symbolism without meaningful action risks increasing frustration among ordinary Muslims who see selective outrage as hypocrisy rather than genuine solidarity.

According to the report, strategic interests form the core of the emerging understanding involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the United States in opposition to Iran. Saudi Arabia views Iran as its main regional rival across conflicts stretching from Yemen to Iraq and Lebanon. Weakening Tehran, even through foreign military pressure, supports Riyadh's wider security goals. Pakistan, facing economic pressure and diplomatic isolation, is believed to be seeking financial relief, defence cooperation, and political support from Washington and Gulf partners. For the United States, limiting Iran's influence remains a long-standing strategic objective, while Israel sees the situation as an opportunity to weaken what it considers its most serious regional threat.

India Advises Nationals In Qatar To Stay Alert

DOHA

The Embassy of India in Doha on Friday issued a fresh advisory asking Indian citizens in Qatar to follow safety guidelines issued by local authorities, particularly the Qatar Ministry of Interior, amid the current security situation.

In a message shared on the social media platform X, the embassy said Indian travellers should remain in contact with their airlines as Qatar's airspace remains temporarily closed and flight operations are suspended.

The advisory urged Indians living in Qatar to stay in safe places, avoid going out unless absolutely necessary, and stay away from windows and open areas that may expose them to danger.

Meanwhile, the Qatar Ministry of Interior announced that all categories of entry visas that have expired or are about to expire will be extended for one month starting February 28. Authorities said the extension could be further prolonged depending on the evolving situation.

For emergencies, Indian nationals have the option of leaving Qatar through the Salwa land border crossing into Saudi Arabia. Indians holding valid visas from the United States, United Kingdom or the Schengen Area — provided they have used them at least once — can obtain a visa on arrival in Saudi Arabia.

The embassy has also opened a registration link to help stranded Indian transit passengers obtain temporary Saudi transit visas if they have confirmed onward travel tickets.

Indian Embassy in Doha urges citizens to follow local safety guidelines as Qatar faces security tensions, temporary airspace closure, and recent drone and missile interceptions

The advisory follows rising tensions in West Asia after Qatar reported intercepting drones and missiles within its territory. According to the Qatar Ministry of Defence, the Qatar Emiri Air Defence Forces recently intercepted a drone targeting the Al-Udeid Air Base.

Officials said Qatar's armed forces successfully intercepted most incoming missiles and drones launched from Iran in recent incidents. Authorities have urged residents to remain calm, avoid rumours, and rely only on official updates for accurate information.

Iran Launches New Missile Strikes, Vows Stronger Attacks Ahead

TEHRAN

Iran launched a new wave of missile and drone attacks, promising stronger operations as tensions with Israel and the United States continue rising.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said its aerospace forces carried out the 21st wave of strikes under the operation named Operation True Promise. The attack involved swarms of suicide drones and advanced Khayber missiles fitted with cluster warheads.

According to the IRGC, the operation aimed to overwhelm the air defence systems of Israel. The coordinated assault was reportedly given the code name "Ya Mu'izz al-Mu'minin."

Iranian military officials warned that the retaliatory campaign could intensify in the coming days. They said air defence systems across Iran are continuing to intercept drones and aircraft linked to Israel and the United States.

Ibrahim Zolfaghari, spokesperson for the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters.

Two historic uprisings decades apart shaped the political journey of Nepal's former prime minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli

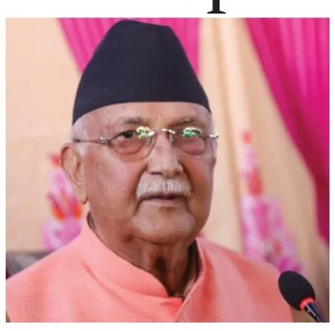
Two Uprisings Mark Rise And Fall Of Nepal's Oli

KATHMANDU

The political rise and fall of Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, former prime minister of Nepal, is closely linked to two major uprisings separated by more than fifty years.

Oli, now 74, first gained attention during the Jhapa uprising in the early 1970s. The movement was a radical leftist rebellion in eastern Nepal near the border with India. Young activists challenged local landlords and state authority during that period, and Oli emerged as a prominent figure.

Over the decades, he moved from activism to mainstream politics. He gradually rose through the ranks of the Communist Party of Nepal and later became chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist). His long political career eventually saw him serve as Nepal's prime minister four times. During his tenure, Oli took several strong political decisions that helped build his image as a nationalist leader.



One of the most notable moments came in 2015 when he blamed India for a blockade at the Nepal border after a new constitution was introduced. Relations between the two neighbours also became tense after Nepal released a political map including the disputed areas of Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh.

Supporters call him "Ba," or father figure, praising his strong leadership, while critics say he weakened party democracy and ignored corruption. His decline followed the 2025 youth protests against corruption, unemployment and restrictions. After police firing killed 19 people, he resigned, marking a shift toward youth-driven politics.

Etihad Resumes Limited Flights From Abu Dhabi Amid Conflict

ABU DHABI

Etihad Airways has resumed a limited number of commercial flights from Abu Dhabi as tensions continue in West Asia.

The airline announced on Friday that it will operate select international routes until March 19. Passengers who had earlier bookings will be re-accommodated on available flights as soon as possible.

According to the airline, the temporary schedule will connect the UAE capital with several important destinations across Asia, Europe and North America. Cities included in the revised flight plan are Ahmedabad, Bangkok, Bengaluru, Cairo, Colombo, Delhi, Frankfurt, Hanoi, Hyderabad, Jeddah, Kuala Lumpur, London, Madrid, Male, Milan, Moscow, Mumbai, New York, Paris, Phuket, Riyadh, Rome, Seoul, Toronto and Zurich.

The airline has asked passengers to travel to the airport only if they have received confirmation from Etihad or hold a confirmed ticket on the newly scheduled flights.

Meanwhile, other airlines have continued operations on some routes to India. Flights operated by Emirates, Air Arabia and Oman Air have been operating to Thiruvananthapuram International Airport in Thiruvananthapuram. Airport authorities said another Air Arabia flight to Sharjah was also scheduled later in the evening.

At the same time, the Ministry of Civil Aviation confirmed that 281 flights scheduled by Indian domestic airlines were cancelled on Thursday.

Taxes And Costs Push Pakistan Cotton Farmers Toward Alternatives

LAHORE

Pakistan's cotton sector is facing increasing pressure as rising taxes, high farming costs and policy challenges push many farmers to consider switching to other crops.

With the cotton sowing season approaching in South Punjab and Sindh, farmers are preparing for the upcoming Kharif cycle under heavy economic strain. Growers say they are not only buying seeds but also carrying a growing tax burden that could affect their decision to plant cotton this year. According to a report, farmers are also struggling with rising input costs such as fertilisers, seeds and fuel. Even after completing the crop cycle, growers often face uncertainty in the market where middlemen dominate the supply chain, making it difficult to secure fair prices. Agricultural organisations have repeatedly urged the federal and provincial governments to introduce reforms to support cotton farmers. One key demand is the removal of the 18 per cent General Sales Tax on cottonseed and oilcakes, which farmers say significantly increases production costs. Pakistan Business Forum Punjab President Malik Talat Suhail has urged the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue to issue an order removing the tax to encourage cotton cultivation. The Federal Committee on Agriculture had set a national production target of 10.18 million bales for the 2025-26 season. However, production reached only 6.85 million bales, about 34 per cent below the target. Farmers warn that without government support, many may shift to crops such as sugarcane.

HCF URGES CANADA TO BAN KHALISTANI GROUPS AFTER KILLING

OTTAWA

Hindu Canadian Foundation (HCF) has urged the government of Canada to designate Khalistani extremist groups as terrorist organisations following the killing of a prominent critic, Nancy Grewal. The foundation strongly condemned the targeted murder and warned authorities about the growing threat posed by Canada-based Khalistani extremist networks.

It said the incident should serve as a serious warning for political leaders and security agencies. Grewal, 45, was stabbed to death at her home on March 3. According to media reports, emergency services responded to a call shortly before 9:30 pm. Paramedics from Essex Windsor Emergency Medical Services found her with multiple serious stab wounds and rushed her to hospital, where she later died.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	7		5		1		3	4
4		1		9		8		
	3		4		7		9	1
	2			3		9		
3		9	1		4		6	2
	1			7		3		
	6	3		4			7	9
1			7		5	4		
	4	7		1			5	6

7	6	1	8	5	2	3	9	4
3	8	4	7	9	1	6	2	5
9	2	5	6	3	4	8	1	7
1	9	8	4	6	7	5	3	2
6	4	3	5	2	9	7	8	1
5	7	2	3	1	8	4	6	9
4	1	6	2	7	3	9	5	8
8	3	9	1	4	5	2	7	6
2	5	7	9	8	6	1	4	3

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

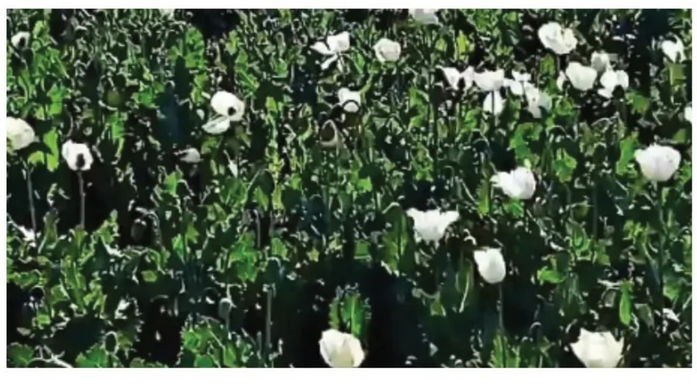
DRUG CONCERN

Balochistan Emerging As New Poppy Cultivation Hub

ISLAMABAD

People in Balochistan are increasingly worried as the region is becoming a new centre for poppy cultivation in Pakistan, raising fears about the spread of illegal drug trade.

A recent report published by The Diplomat said the shift appears to have happened after the Taliban government in Afghanistan imposed a nationwide ban on poppy cultivation in April 2022. Since then, some farming activities linked to narcotics production seem to have moved across the border into Pakistan, especially in Balochistan.



Despite growing concern among local communities, the issue has not yet become a major policy priority for the Pakistani government, the report noted.

Earlier this year, the Anti-Narcotics Force carried out several operations across the country and seized more than 1,350 kilograms of drugs valued at about 77.85 million Pakistani rupees.

During these operations, nine suspects were arrested and further investigations were launched.

Officials said drug networks were attempting to move narcotics from Panjgur district in Balochistan through Turbat city and then towards the coastal towns of Gwadar and Pasni.

From there, traffickers planned to transport the drugs by sea using high-speed boats to countries in the Gulf region as well as to Yemen and Tanzania.

The report said the seizures appear routine on the surface, but data from the National Initiative against Organised Crime, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Global Organized Crime Index suggests deeper changes in the regional drug trade.

Samson among eight nominees for ICC T20 WC Player award

INDIAN OPENER SHORTLISTED AFTER STUNNING PERFORMANCES IN CRUCIAL MATCHES OF TOURNAMENT

DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday announced an eight-player shortlist for the Player of the Tournament award at the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup, with India's in-form opener Sanju Samson among the nominees.

The other contenders include England all-rounder Will Jacks, Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan, South Africa pacer Lungi Ngidi and captain Aiden Markram, New Zealand all-rounder Rachin Ravindra and wicketkeeper-batter Tim Seifert, and USA pacer Shadley van Schalkwyk. Samson, who missed the early matches of the tournament, made an immediate impact after entering the playing XI. The wicketkeeper-batter delivered back-to-back player-of-the-match performances, emerging as a key contributor to India's run to the final. The Kerala batter smashed a blistering 42-ball 89 against England in the semifinal, guiding India to a thrilling seven-run victory. Earlier, he struck a commanding 97 off 50 balls against the West Indies in a virtual quarterfinal clash, laying the foundation for a five-wicket win. In just four matches, Samson has scored 232 runs at an impressive average of 77.33 and an explosive strike rate of 201.73.

Pakistan's Farhan has been the standout batter of the tournament, amassing a record 383 runs in six innings — the most by a player in a single edition of the T20 World Cup. He also became the first cricketer to score two centuries in the same tournament edition.

England's Jacks has delivered a strong all-round performance, scoring 226 runs and taking nine wickets while earning four player-of-the-match awards in eight matches. South Africa's pace spearhead Ngidi claimed 12 wickets in seven games at an economy rate of 7.19, while skipper Markram contributed 286 runs and a wicket across eight matches. New Zealand's Ravindra has been effective with both bat and ball, scoring 128 runs and taking 11 wickets, while Seifert has accumulated 274 runs with several crucial innings. Despite the USA exiting in the group stage, van Schalkwyk impressed with 13 wickets in just four matches at an economy rate of 6.80. India will face New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Regragui quits as Morocco coach months before WC; Ouahbi named successor

RABAT

Shock exit comes less than 100 days before tournament in North America.

Morocco head coach Walid Regragui has stepped down from his role just months before the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026, with the country's football federation naming Mohamed Ouahbi as his successor.

Regragui confirmed his decision during a late-night press conference alongside Fouzi Lekjaa, president of the Royal Moroccan Football Federation. The announcement comes less than 100 days before the global tournament begins across the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19.

"The team needs a fresh face, a different energy and a new perspective," Regragui said. "I believe this change will help the team continue progressing and bring renewed vision ahead of the World Cup."

The 50-year-old coach guided Morocco to a historic semifinal finish at the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Doha, becoming the first African and Arab nation to reach the last four of the tournament. His tenure raised global expectations for the Atlas Lions and transformed the team into a competitive force on the world stage.

However, criticism grew following Morocco's failure to win the Africa Cup of Nations earlier this year. Hosting the tournament, Morocco lost 1–0 to Senegal national football team in the final, a result that intensified scrutiny of Regragui's tactics and leadership.

The federation moved quickly to appoint Ouahbi as the new head coach. The 49-year-old Belgian-Moroccan previously led Morocco's under-20 side to a Youth World Cup title and also managed the country's under-23 team. Much of his earlier coaching career was spent working with youth teams at Belgian club R.S.C. Anderlecht. "I'm not here to rebuild," Ouahbi said at his unveiling. "The foundations are already strong. My job is to maintain performance and continue the team's progress."

Ouahbi also announced that Portuguese coach João Sacramento will serve as assistant. Sacramento previously worked under José Mourinho at clubs including AS Roma and Tottenham Hotspur.

Morocco captain Achraf Hakimi paid tribute to Regragui on social media, calling him a "legend" whose leadership inspired the team and millions of fans.

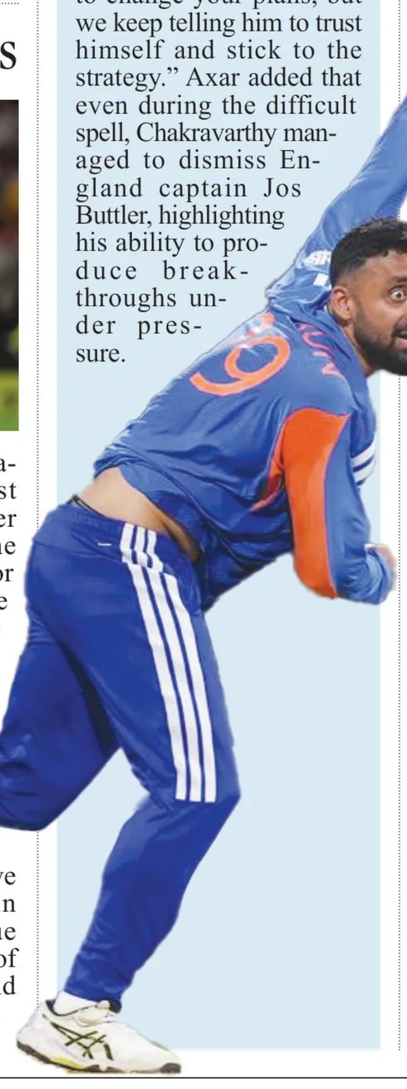
Morocco will play warm-up matches against Ecuador national football team and Paraguay national football team later this month. The Atlas Lions have been drawn in World Cup Group C alongside Brazil national football team, Haiti national football team and Scotland national football team.

Axar backs Chakravarthy as India weigh spin options ahead of T20 WC final

MUMBAI

India vice-captain Axar Patel has backed struggling spinner Varun Chakravarthy as the team's "X-factor" despite the leg-spinner's dip in form ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final against New Zealand national cricket team on Sunday. Chakravarthy, currently the top-ranked bowler in T20 internationals, has endured a difficult run since the Super Eight stage of the tournament. His struggles were evident during India's tense seven-run semifinal victory over England national cricket team at Wankhede Stadium on Thursday, where he conceded 64 runs in four overs. The mystery spinner came under heavy attack from England batter Jacob Bethell, who smashed him for 42 runs off just 13 balls on his way to a brilliant century. Bethell struck three sixes in Chakravarthy's opening over, immediately putting the Indian bowler under pressure and preventing him from settling into a rhythm.

Despite the tough outing, Axar said the team management continues to believe in Chakravarthy's abilities and has been encouraging him to stay confident and stick to his plans. "We have spoken about it," Axar said after the match. "In knockout games, mindset becomes very important. When a batter targets you, it is easy to change your plans, but we keep telling him to trust himself and stick to the strategy." Axar added that even during the difficult spell, Chakravarthy managed to dismiss England captain Jos Buttler, highlighting his ability to produce breakthroughs under pressure.



Venus Williams suffers first-round exit to Parry in Indian Wells comeback bid

INDIAN WELLS

Seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams endured another setback in her comeback campaign after losing in the opening round of the BNP Paribas Open to France's Diane Parry on Thursday.

The 45-year-old American was defeated 6–3, 6–7 (4), 6–1 in a three-set contest in the California desert tournament. The loss extended Williams' difficult run on the WTA Tour, where she has now dropped her last eight singles matches.

Williams, who received a wild card entry into both the singles and doubles draws, showed flashes of her trademark resilience during the match. After losing the opening set, the veteran rallied strongly in the second to force a tie-break and level the match. However, Parry regained control in the deciding set, dominating proceedings to secure victory.

The match marked Williams' 10th career appearance at the Indian Wells tournament and her first since 2024, when she also exited in the opening round as a wild-card entrant. Her participation this year also carried special significance, coming nearly 30 years after she made her tournament debut as a 15-year-old in 1996.

Despite the defeat, Williams expressed gratitude for the support she received from the crowd.

"Of course losing isn't fun, but it's great to play in front of a home crowd," she said. "They were behind me the whole way and that made it really special."

The Southern California native acknowledged the challenges of returning to competition but said the enthusiasm of fans continues to motivate her. Williams' comeback to the tour began last year, with her only victory during that stretch coming at the Washington Open. Since then, results have been difficult, including early exits at the Australian Open and the ATX Open in Austin last month, where she lost to Ajla Tomljanovic. Williams also made history earlier this year by becoming the oldest woman to compete in the singles main draw of the Australian Open, surpassing the record previously held by Kimiko Date.

Following the victory, Parry will advance to the second round where she is set to face American star Madison Keys.

Spurs slump to Palace, deepen relegation worries

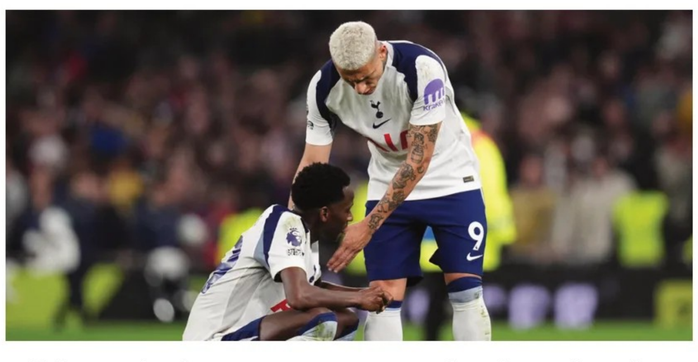
LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur slipped deeper into relegation trouble after a damaging 3-1 defeat to Crystal Palace in the Premier League, extending their miserable run without a win.

The north London club has now lost five consecutive league matches and is winless in 11 top-flight games — their worst such run since 1975 — leaving them hovering dangerously close to the relegation zone.

Tottenham had briefly raised hopes among the home fans when striker Dominic Solanke gave them the lead in the 34th minute at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. However, a chaotic spell before halftime turned the match decisively in Palace's favour.

The turning point came when Tottenham defender Micky van de Ven committed a professional foul on Palace forward Ismaila Sarr inside the penalty area. Van de Ven was shown a red card, and Sarr calmly converted the resulting penalty to level the score.



Palace seized momentum immediately afterward. Striker Jørgen Strand Larsen put the visitors ahead after being set up by midfielder Adam Wharton, who had earlier been instrumental in creating chances.

Sarr then struck again just before halftime, finishing off another incisive move to cap a devastating 12-minute spell that left Tottenham stunned and their supporters furious.

The atmosphere inside the stadium quickly turned hostile, with many fans leaving long before the final whistle as the struggling side failed to mount a comeback. The defeat leaves Tottenham in 16th place in the standings, just one point above the relegation zone following West Ham United's victory over Fulham FC earlier in the week. Interim manager Igor Tudor, who replaced the sacked Thomas Frank, has now overseen three consecutive league defeats. Tottenham have managed only one win in their last 13 home league matches, intensifying fears of a shock drop to the second tier for the first time since the 1977–78 season.

7 nations boycott Paralympics opening ceremony over Russia participation row

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

Seven countries have announced they will boycott the opening ceremony of the 2026 Winter Paralympics in protest against the decision to allow athletes from Russia and Belarus to compete under their national flags.

Organisers of the Milan-Cortina Games confirmed that the boycott will involve the opening ceremony scheduled at the historic Verona Arena.

The decision follows a controversial move by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to permit six Russian and four Belarusian athletes to participate under their national colours for the first time since 2014.

Russia and Belarus had previously been banned from the 2022 Winter Paralympics after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Although athletes from the two nations were later allowed to compete as neutral participants at the Paris 2024 Summer Paralympics, the decision to restore their flags at the current Games has sparked strong opposition.

According to the IPC, the nations that will skip the opening ceremony for political reasons are Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine.

IPC communications director Craig Spence confirmed the development during a press conference in Cortina D'Ampezzo, saying the organisation respects the decision taken by the participating committees.

"You will have seen reports over the past 10 days suggesting different numbers of countries considering a boycott," Spence said.

"To be clear, the National Paralympic Committees not attending the ceremony for political reasons are Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine."

UEFA delays decision on venue for Spain–Argentina Finalissima clash

LONDON

UEFA has postponed a final decision on the venue for the upcoming Finalissima between Spain national football team and Argentina national football team, saying clarity on whether the match will remain in Qatar or shift to another location is expected only by the end of next week. The intercontinental clash between the champions of Europe and South America is currently scheduled for March 27 at Lusail International Stadium in Doha. However, uncertainty surrounding regional tensions in West Asia has triggered speculation that the match could be moved to another city. Media reports have suggested that alternative venues could include Wembley Stadium in London, or stadiums in Milan and Rome. Despite the speculation, UEFA said discussions with organisers are still ongoing and no formal decision on relocating the match has yet been taken.

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